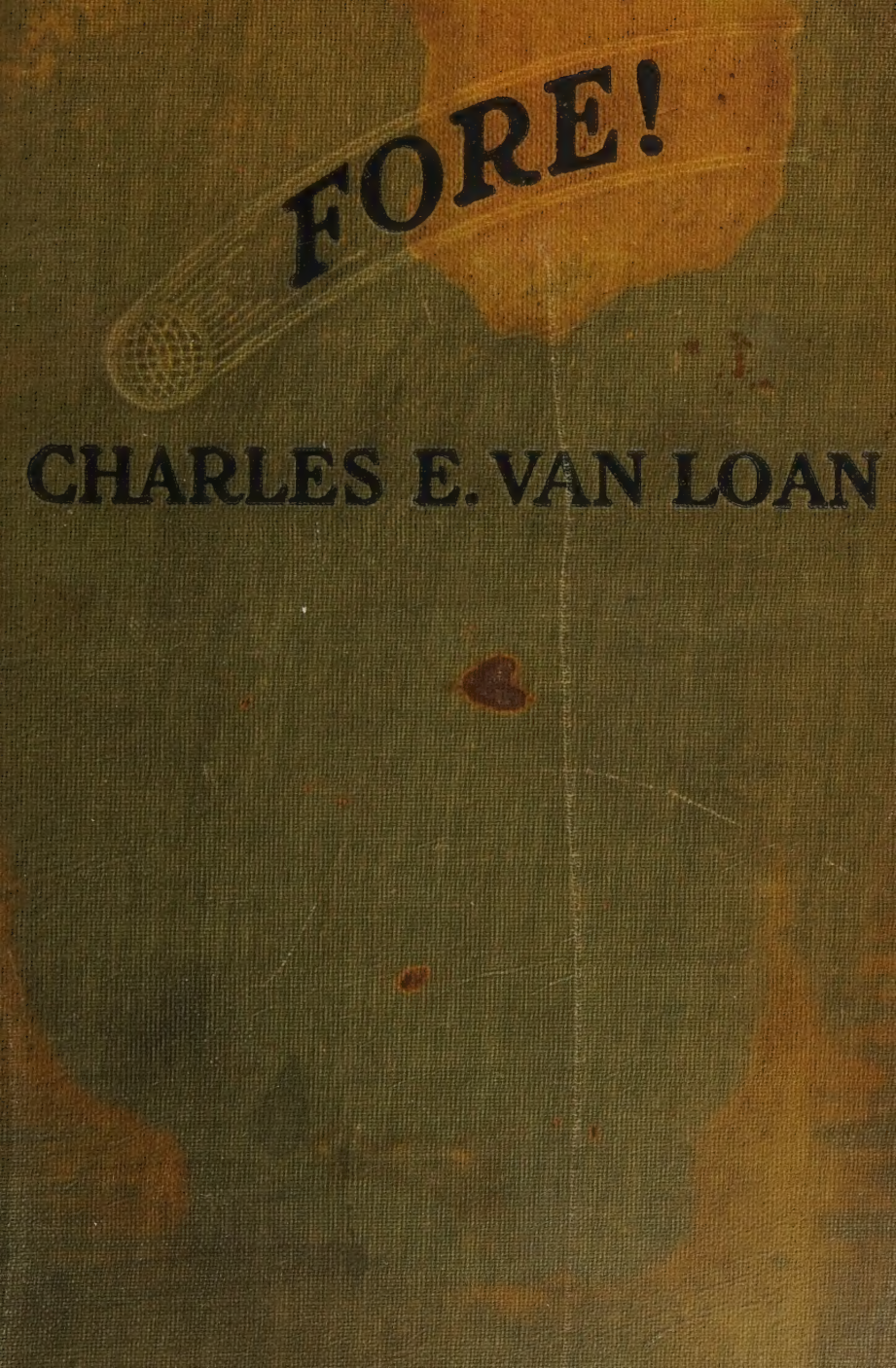
FORE!
CHARLES E. VAN LOAN

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BY

CHARLES E. VAN LOAN

AUTHOR OF "OLD MAN CURRY," "BUCK PARVIN AND THE MOVIES," ETC.

NEW YORK

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My dear Ed. Tufts:—

Once, when a mere child, I strayed as far away from home as Pico Street, and followed that thoroughfare westward until the houses gave way to open country, hedged by a dense forest of real estate signs.

In the midst of that wilderness I chanced upon a somewhat chubby gentleman engaged in the pursuit of a small white ball, which, when he came within striking distance, he beat savagely with weapons of wood and iron. That, sir, was my first sight of you, and my earliest acquaintance with the game of golf. I remember scanning the horizon for your keeper.

Times have changed since then. The old Pico Street course is covered with bungalows and mortgages. Golf clubs are everywhere. The hills are dotted with middle-aged gentlemen who use the same weapons of wood and iron and the same red-hot adjectives. A man may now admit that he commits golf and the statement will not be used against him. Everybody is doing it. The pastime has become popular.

But it took courage to be a pioneer, to listen to the sneers about "Cow-pasture pool" and to remain cool, calm and collected when putting within sight of the country road and within hearing of the comments of the Great Unenlightened. That courage entitles you to this small recognition, and also entitles you to purchase as many copies of this book as you can afford.

Yours as usual,

CHARLES E. VAN LOAN

To Mr. Edward B. Tufts of the Los Angeles Country Club.

Los Angeles, Cal., January 17, 1918.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Gentlemen, You Can't Go Through	11
Little Poison Ivy	51
The Major, D. O. S.	89
A Mixed Foursome	127
"Similia Similibus Curantur"	164
A Cure for Lumbago	201
The Man Who Quit	231
The Ooley-Cow	262
Adolphus and the Rough Diamond	299

FORE!

GENTLEMEN, YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH!

I

THERE has been considerable argument about it—even a mention of ethics—though where ethics figures in this case is more than I know. I'd like to take a flat-footed stance as claiming that the end justified the means. Saint George killed the Dragon, and Hercules mopped up the Augean stables, but little Wally Wallace—one hundred and forty-two pounds in his summer underwear—did a bigger job and a better job when the betting was odds-on-and-write-your-own-ticket that it couldn't be done. I wouldn't mind heading a subscription to present him with a gold medal about the size of a soup plate, inscribed as follows, to wit and viz.:

W. W. Wallace—He Put the Fore in Foursome.

Every golfer who ever conceded himself a two-foot putt because he was afraid he might miss it has sweated and suffered and blasphemed in the wake of a slow foursome. All

the clubs that I have ever seen—and I've travelled a bit—are cursed with at least one of these Creeping Pestilences which you observe mostly from the rear.

You're a golfer, of course, and you know the make-up of a slow foursome as well as I do: Four nice old gentlemen, prominent in business circles, church members, who remember it even when they top a tee shot, pillars of society, rich enough to be carried over the course in palanquins, but too proud to ride, too dignified to hurry, too meek to argue except among themselves, and too infernally selfish to stand aside and let the younger men go through. They take nine practice swings before hitting a shot, and then flub it disgracefully; they hold a prayer meeting on every putting green and a *post-mortem* on every tee, and a rheumatic snail could give them a flying start and beat them out in a fifty-yard dash. Know 'em? What golfer doesn't?

But nobody knows why it is that the four slowest players in every club always manage to hook up in a sort of permanent alliance. Nobody knows why they never stage their creeping contests on the off days when the course is clear. Nobody knows why they always pick the sunniest afternoons, when the locker room is full of young men dressing in a hurry. Nobody knows why they bolt their luncheons and scuttle out to the first tee, nor where that speed goes as soon as they drive and start down the course.

Nobody knows why they refuse to walk any faster than a bogged mooley cow. Nobody knows why they never look behind them. Nobody knows why they never hear any one yell "Fore!" Nobody knows why they are so dead set against letting any one through.

Everybody knows the fatal effect of standing too long over the ball, all dressed up with nowhere to go. Everybody knows of the tee shots that are slopped and sliced and hooked; of the indecision caused by the long wait before playing the second; of the change of clubs when the first choice was the correct one; of the inevitable penalty exacted by loss of temper and mental poise. Everybody knows that a slow foursome gives the Recording Angel a busy afternoon, and leaves a sulphurous haze over an entire course. But the aged reprobates who are responsible for all this trouble—do they care how much grief and rage and bitterness simmers in their wake? You think they do? Think again. Golf and Business are the only games they have ever had time to learn, and one set of rules does for both. The rest of the world may go hang! Golf is a serious matter with these hoary offenders, and they manage to make it serious for everybody behind them—the fast-walking, quick-swinging fellows who are out for a sweat and a good time and lose both because the slow foursome blocks the way.

Yes, you recognise the thumb-nail sketch—it is the slow foursome which infests your course;

the one which you find in front of you when you go visiting. You think that four men who are inconsiderate enough to ruin your day's sport and ruffle your temper ought to be disciplined, called up on the carpet, taken in hand by the Greens Committee. You think they are the worst ever—but wait! You are about to hear of the golfing renegades known as the Big Four, who used to sew us up twice a week as regularly as the days came round; you are about to hear of Elsberry J. Watlington, and Colonel Jim Peck, and Samuel Alexander Peebles, and W. Cotton Hamilton—world's champions in the Snail Stakes, undisputed holders of the Challenge Belt for Practice Swinging, and undefeated catch-as-catch-can loiterers on the Putting Green.

Six months ago we would have backed Watlington, Peck, Peebles and Hamilton against the wide world, bet dollars against your dimes and allowed you to select your own stakeholders, timekeepers and judges. That's how much confidence we had in the Big Four. They were without doubt and beyond argument the slowest and most exasperating quartette of obstructionists that ever laid their middle-aged stomachs behind the line of a putt.

Do I hear a faint murmur of dissent? Going a little strong, am I? All right, glad you mentioned it, because we may as well settle this question of supremacy here and now.

To save time, I will admit that your foursome

is slower than Congress and more irritating than the Senate. Permit me to ask you one question: Going back over the years, can you recall a single instance when your slow foursome allowed you to play through? . . . A lost ball, was it? . . . Well, anyway, you got through them. . . . Thank you, and your answer puts you against the ropes. I will now knock you clear out of the ring with one well-directed statement of fact. Tie on your bonnet good and tight and listen to this: The Big Four held up our course for seven long and painful years, and during that period of time they never allowed any one to pass them, lost ball or no lost ball.

That stops you, eh? I rather thought it would. It stopped us twice a week.

II

Visitors used to play our course on Wednesdays and Saturdays—our big days—and then sit in the lounging room and try hard to remember that they were our guests. There were two questions which they never failed to ask:

"Don't they ever let anybody through?"

And then:

"How long has this been going on?"

When we answered them truthfully they shook their heads, looked out of the windows, and told us how much better their clubs were handled. Our course was all right—they had to say that much in fairness. It was well trapped

and bunkered, and laid out with an eye to the average player; the fair greens were the best in the state; the putting greens were like velvet; the holes were sporty enough to suit anybody; but—— And then they looked out of the window again.

You see, the trouble was that the Big Four practically ran the club as they liked. They had financed it in its early days, and as a reward had been elected to almost everything in sight. We used to say that they shook dice to see who should be president and so forth, and probably they did. They might as well have settled it that way as any other, for the annual election and open meeting was a joke.

It usually took place in the lounging room on a wet Saturday afternoon. Somebody would get up and begin to drone through a report of the year's activities. Then somebody else would make a motion and everybody would say "Ay!" After that the result of the annual election of officers would be announced. The voting members always handed in the printed slips which they found on the tables, and the ticket was never scratched—it would be Watlington, Peck, Peebles and Hamilton all the way. The only real question would be whether or not the incoming president of the club would buy a drink for all hands. If it was Peck's turn the motion was lost.

As a natural result of this sort of thing the Big Four never left the saddle for an instant.

Talk about perpetuation in office—they had it down to a fine point. They were always on the Board of Directors; they saw to it that control of the Greens Committee never slipped out of their hands; they had two of the three votes on the House Committee, and no outsider was even considered for treasurer. They were dictators with a large D, and nobody could do a thing about it.

If a mild kick was ever made or new blood suggested, the kicker was made to feel like an ingrate. Who started the club anyway? Who dug up the money? Who swung the deal that put the property in our hands? Why, Watlington, Peck, Peebles and Hamilton, to be sure! Could any one blame them for wanting to keep an eye on the organisation? Cer-tain-ly not. The Big Four had us bluffed, bulldozed, buffaloed, licked to a whisper.

Peck, Peebles and Hamilton were the active heads of the Midland Manufacturing Company, and it was pretty well known that the bulk of Watlington's fortune was invested in the same enterprise. Those who knew said they were just as ruthless in business as they were in golf —quite a strong statement.

They seemed to regard the Sundown Golf and Country Club as their private property, and we were welcome to pay dues and amuse ourselves five days a week, but on Wednesdays and Saturdays we were not to infringe on the sovereign rights of the Big Four.

They never entered any of the club tournaments, for that would have necessitated breaking up their foursome. They always turned up in a body, on the tick of noon, and there was an immediate scramble to beat them to Number One tee. Those who lost out stampeded over to Number Ten and played the second nine first. Nobody wanted to follow them; but a blind man, playing without a caddie, couldn't have helped but catch up with them somewhere on the course.

If you wonder why the club held together, you have only to recall the story of the cow-puncher whose friend beckoned him away from the faro layout to inform him that the game was crooked.

"Hell!" said the cow-puncher. "I know that; but—it's the only game in town, ain't it?"

The S. G. & C. C. was the only golf club within fifty miles.

III

When Wally Wallace came home from college he blossomed out as a regular member of the club. He had been a junior member before, one of the tennis squad.

Wally is the son of old Hardpan Wallace, of the Trans-Pacific outfit—you may have heard of him—and the sole heir to more millions than he will ever be able to spend; but we didn't hold this against the boy. He isn't the sort that money can spoil, with nothing about him to re-

mind you of old Hardpan, unless it might be a little more chin than he really needs.

Wally's first act as a full-fledged member of the club was to qualify for the James Peck Annual Trophy—a pretty fair sort of cup, considering the donor.

He turned in a nice snappy eighty-one, which showed us that a college education had not been wasted on him, and also caused several of the Class-A men to sit up a bit and take notice.

He came booming through to the semi-finals with his head up and his tail over the dashboard. It was there that he ran into me. Now I am no Jerry Travers, but there are times when I play to my handicap, which is ten, and I had been going fairly well. I had won four matches —one of them by default. Wally had also won four matches, but the best showing made against him was five down and four to go. His handicap was six, so he would have to start me two up; but I had seen enough of his game to know that I was up against the real thing, and would need a lot of luck to give the boy anything like a close battle. He was a strong, heady match player, and if he had a weakness the men whom he had defeated hadn't been able to spot it. Altogether it wasn't a very brilliant outlook for me; but, as a matter of fact, I suppose no ten-handicap man ever ought to have a brilliant outlook. It isn't coming to him. If he has one it is because the handicapper has been careless.

Under our rules a competitor in a club tourna-

ment has a week in which to play his man, and it so happened that we agreed on Wednesday for our meeting. Wally called for me in his new runabout, and we had lunch together—I shook him and stuck him for it, and he grinned and remarked that a man couldn't be lucky at everything. While we were dressing he chattered like a magpie, talking about everything in the world but golf, which was a sign that he wasn't worrying much. He expected easy picking, and under normal conditions he would have had it.

We left the first tee promptly at one-forty-five P. M., our caddies carrying the little red flags which demand the right of way over everything. I might have suggested starting at Number Ten if I had thought of it, but to tell the truth I was a wee mite nervous and was wondering whether I had my drive with me or not. You know how the confounded thing comes and goes. So we started at Number One, and my troubles began. Wally opened up on me with a four-four-three, making the third hole in a stroke under par, and when we reached the fourth tee we were all square and my handicap was gone.

It was on the fourth tee that we first began to notice signs of congestion ahead of us. One foursome had just driven off and beckoned us to come through, another was waiting to go, and the fair green on the way to the fifth looked like the advance of the Mexican standing army.

"Somebody has lost the transmission out of his wheel chair," said Wally. "Well, we should worry—we've got the red flags and the right of way. Fore!" And he proceeded to smack a perfect screamer down the middle of the course—two hundred and fifty yards if it was an inch. I staggered into one and laid my ball some distance behind his, but on the direct line to the pin. Then we had to wait a bit while another foursome putted out.

"There oughtn't to be any congestion on a day like this," said Wally. "Must be a bunch of old men ahead."

"It's the Big Four," said I. "Watlington, Peck, Peebles and Hamilton. They always take their time."

From where we were we could see the seventh and eighth fair greens. There wasn't a player in sight on either one.

"Good Lord!" said Wally. "They've got the whole United States wide open ahead of 'em. They're not holding their place on the course."

"They never do," said I, and just then the foursome moved off the putting green.

"Give her a ride, old top!" said Wally.

I claim that my second shot wasn't half bad—for a ten-handicap man. I used a brassy and reached the green about thirty feet from the pin, but the demon Wally pulled a mid-iron out of his bag, waggled it once or twice, and then made my brassy look sick. When we reached the top of the hill, there was his ball ten feet

from the cup. I ran up, playing it safe for a par four, but Wally studied the roll of the green for about ten seconds—and dropped a very fat three. He was decent enough to apologise.

"I'm playing over my head," said he.

I couldn't dispute it—two threes on par fours might well be over anybody's head. One down and fourteen to go; it had all the earmarks of a massacre.

We had quite an audience at the fifth tee—two foursomes were piled up there, cursing. "What's the matter, gentlemen?" asked Wally. "Can't you get through?"

"Nobody can get through," said Billy Williams. "It's the Big Four."

"But they'll respect the red flags, won't they?"

It was a perfectly natural question for a stranger to ask—and Wally was practically a stranger, though most of the men knew who he was. It brought all sorts of answers.

"You think they will? I'll bet you a little two to one, no limit, that they're all colour-blind!"

"Oh, yes, they'll let you through!"

"They'll *ask* you to come through—won't they, Billy? They'll insist on it, what?"

"They're full of such tricks!"

Wally was puzzled. He didn't quite know what to make of it. "But a red flag," said he, "gives you the right of way."

"Everywhere but here," said Billy Williams.

"But in this case it's a rule!" argued Wally.

"Those fellows in front make their own rules."

"But the Greens Committee——" And this was where everybody laughed.

Wally stooped and teed his ball.

"Look here," said he, "I'll bet you anything you like that they let us through. Why, they can't help themselves!"

"You bet that they'll let you through of their own accord?" asked Ben Ashley, who never has been known to pass up a plain cinch.

"On our request to be allowed to pass," said Wally.

"If you drive into 'em without their permission you lose," stipulated Ben.

"Right!" said Wally.

"Got you for a dozen balls!" said Ben.

"Anybody else want some of it?" asked Wally.

Before he got off the tee he stood to lose six dozen balls; but his nerve was unshaken and he slammed out another tremendous drive. I sliced into a ditch and away we went, leaving a great deal of promiscuous kidding behind us. It took me two shots to get out at all, and Wally picked up another hole on me.

Two down—murder!

On the sixth tee we ran into another mass meeting of malcontents. Old Man Martin, our prize grouch, grumbled a bit when we called attention to our red flags.

"What's the use?" said he. "You're on your way, but you ain't going anywhere. Might just as well sit down and take it easy. Watlington has got a lost ball, and the others have gone on to the green so's nobody can get through. Won't do you a bit of good to drive, Wally. There's two foursomes hung up over the hill now, and they'll be right there till Watlington finds that ball. Sit down and be sociable."

"What'll you bet that we don't get through?" demanded Wally, who was beginning to show signs of irritation.

"Whatever you got the most of, sonny—provided you make the bet this way: they got to *let* you through. Of course you might drive into 'em or walk through 'em, but that ain't being done—much."

"Right! The bet is that they let us through. One hundred fish."

Old Martin cackled and turned his cigar round and round in the corner of his mouth—a wolf when it comes to a cinch bet.

"Gosh! Listen to our banty rooster crow! Want another hundred, sonny?"

"Yes—grandpa!" said Wally, and sent another perfect drive soaring up over the hill.

Number Six is a long hole, and the ordinary player never attempts to carry the cross-bunker on his second. I followed with a middling-to-good shot, and we bade the congregation farewell.

"It's ridiculous!" said Wally as we climbed

the hill. "I never saw a foursome yet that wouldn't yield to a red flag, or one that wouldn't let a twosome through—if properly approached. And we have the right of way over everything on the course. The Greens Committee——"

"Is composed," said I, "of Watlington, Peck and Peebles—three members of the Big Four. They built the club, they run the club, and they have never been known to let anybody through. I'm sorry, Wally, but I'm afraid you're up against it."

The boy stopped and looked at me.

"Then those fellows behind us," said he, "were betting on a cinch, eh?"

"It was your proposition," I reminded him.

"So it was," and he grinned like the good game kid he is. "The Greens Committee, eh? 'Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.' I'm a firm believer in the right method of approach. They wouldn't have the nerve——"

"They have nerve enough for anything," said I, and dropped the subject. I didn't want him to get the idea that I was trying to argue with him and upset his game. One foursome was lying down just over the hill; the other was piled up short of the bunker. Watlington had finally found his ball and played onto the green. The others, of course, had been standing round the pin and holding things up for him.

I took an iron on my second and played short,

intending to pitch over the bunker on my third. Wally used a spoon and got tremendous height and distance. His ball carried the bunker, kicked to the right and stopped behind a sand-trap. It was a phenomenal shot, and with luck on the kick would have gone straight to the pin.

I thought the Big Four would surely be off the green by the time I got up to my ball, but no, Peck was preparing to hole a three-foot putt. Any ordinary dub would have walked up to that pill and tapped it in, but that wasn't Peck's style. He got down on all fours and sighted along the line to the hole. Then he rose, took out his handkerchief, wiped his hands carefully, called for his putter and took an experimental stance, tramping about like a cat "making bread" on a woollen rug.

"Look at him!" grunted Wally. "You don't mind if I go ahead to my ball? It won't bother you?"

"Not in the least," said I.

"I want to play as soon as they get out of the way," he explained.

The Colonel's first stance did not suit him, so he had to go all through the tramping process again. When he was finally satisfied, he began swinging his putter back and forth over the ball, like the pendulum of a grandfather's clock—ten swings, neither more nor less. Could any one blame Wally for boiling inside?

After the three-footer dropped—he didn't miss it, for a wonder—they all gathered round

the hole and pulled out their cards. Knowing each other as well as they did, nobody was trusted to keep the score.

"Fore!" called Wally.

They paid not the slightest attention to him, and it was fully half a minute before they ambled leisurely away in the direction of the seventh tee.

I played my pitch shot, with plenty of backspin on it, and stopped ten or twelve feet short of the hole. Wally played an instant later, a mashie shot intended to clear the trap, but he had been waiting too long and was burning up with impatience. He topped the ball, hit the far edge of the sandtrap and bounced back into a bad lie. Of course I knew why he had been in such a hurry—he wanted to catch the Big Four on the seventh tee. His niblick shot was too strong, but he laid his fifth dead to the hole, giving me two for a win. Just as a matter of record, let me state that I canned a nice rainbow putt for a four. A four on Number Six is rare.

"Nice work!" said Wally. "You're only one down now. Come on, let's get through these miserable old men!"

Watlington was just addressing his ball, the others had already driven. He fussed and he fooled and he waggled his old dreadnaught for fifteen or twenty seconds, and then shot straight into the bunker—a wretchedly topped ball.

"Bless my heart!" said he. "Now why—why do I always miss my drive on this hole?"

Peck started to tell him, being his partner, but Wally interrupted, politely but firmly.

"Gentlemen," said he, "if you have no objection we will go through. We are playing a tournament match. Mr. Curtiss, your honour, I believe."

Well, sir, for all the notice they took of him he might have been speaking to four graven images. Not one of them so much as turned his head. Colonel Peck had the floor.

"I'll tell you, Wat," said he, "I think it's your stance. You're playing the ball too much off your right foot—coming down on it too much. Now if you want it to rise more——" They were moving away now, but very slowly.

"*Fore!*"

This time they had to notice the boy. He was mad clear through, and his voice showed it. They all turned, took one good look at him, and then toddled away, keeping well in the middle of the course. Peck was still explaining the theory of the perfect drive. Wally yelled again; this time they did not even look at him. "Well!" said he. "Of all the damned swine! I—I believe we should drive anyway!"

"You'll lose a lot of bets if you do." Perhaps I shouldn't have said that. Goodness knows I didn't want to see his game go to pieces behind the Big Four—I didn't want to play be-

hind them myself. I tried to explain. The kid came over and patted me on the back.

"You're perfectly right," said he. "I forgot all about those fool bets, but I'd gladly lose all of 'em if I thought I could hit that long-nosed stiff in the back of the neck!" He meant the Colonel. "And so that's the Greens Committee, eh? Holy jumping Jemima! What a club!"

I couldn't think of much of anything to say, so we sat still and watched Watlington dig his way out of the bunker, Peck offering advice after each failure. When Watlington disagreed with Peck's point of view he took issue with him, and all hands joined in the argument. Wally was simply sizzling with pent-up emotion, and after Watlington's fifth shot he began to lift the safety-valve a bit. The language which he used was wonderful, and a great tribute to higher education. Old Hardpan himself couldn't have beaten it, even in his mule-skinning days.

At last the foursome was out of range and I got off a pretty fair tee shot. Wally was still telling me what he thought of the Greens Committee when he swung at the ball, and never have I seen a wider hook. It was still hooking when it disappeared in the woods, out of bounds. His next ball took a slice and rolled into long grass.

"Serves me right for losing my temper," said he with a grin. "I can play this game all right, old top, but when I'm riled it sort of unsettles

me. Something tells me that I'm going to be riled for the next half hour or so. Don't mind what I say. It's all meant for those hogs ahead of us."

I helped him find his ball, and even then we had to wait on Peebles and Hamilton, who were churning along down the middle of the course in easy range. I lighted a cigarette and thought about something else—my income tax, I think it was. I had found this a good system when sewed up behind the Big Four. I don't know what poor Wally was thinking about—man's inhumanity to man, I suppose—for when it came time to shoot he failed to get down to his ball and hammered it still deeper into the grass.

"If it wasn't for the bets," said he, "I'd pick up and we'd go over to Number Eight. I'm afraid that on a strict interpretation of the terms of agreement Martin could spear me for two hundred fish if we skipped a hole."

"He could," said I, "and what's more to the point, he would. They were to let us through—on request."

Wally sighed.

"I've tried one method of approach," said he, "and now I'll try another one. I might tell 'em that I bet two hundred dollars on the suspicion that they were gentlemen, but likely they'd want me to split the winnings. They look like that sort."

Number Seven was a gift on a golden platter.

I won it with a frightful eight, getting into all sorts of grief along the way, but Wally was entirely up in the air and blew the short putt which should have given him a half.

"All square!" said he. "Fair enough! Now we shall see what we shall see!"

His chin was very much in evidence as he hiked to Number Eight tee, and he lost no time getting into action. Colonel Peck was preparing to drive as Wally hove alongside. The Colonel is very fussy about his drive. He has been known to send a caddie to the clubhouse for whispering on the bench. Wally walked up behind him.

"Stand still, young man! Can't you see I'm driving?"

It was in the nature of a royal command.

"Oh!" said Wally. "Meaning me, I presume. Do you know, it strikes me that for a golfer with absolutely no consideration for others, you're quite considerate—of yourself!"

Now I had always sized up the Colonel for a bluffer. He proved himself one by turning a rich maroon colour and trying to swallow his Adam's apple. Not a word came from him.

"Quiet," murmured old Peebles, who looks exactly like a sheep. "Absolute quiet, please."

Wally rounded on him like a flash.

"Another considerate golfer, eh?" he snapped. "Now, gentlemen, under the rules governing tournament play I demand for my opponent and myself the right to go through.

There are open holes ahead; you are not holding your place on the course——"

"Drive, Jim," interposed Watlington in that quiet way of his. "Don't pay any attention to him. Drive."

"But how can I drive while he's hopping up and down behind me? He puts me all off my swing!"

"I'm glad my protest has some effect on you," said Wally. "Now I understand that some of you are members of the Greens Committee of this club. As a member of the said club, I wish to make a formal request that we be allowed to pass."

"Denied," said Watlington. "Drive, Jim."

"Do you mean to say that you refuse us our rights—that you won't let us through?"

"Absolutely," murmured old Peebles. "Absolutely."

"But why—why? On what grounds?"

"On the grounds that you're too fresh," said Colonel Peck. "On the grounds that we don't want you to go through. Sit down and cool off."

"Drive, Jim," said Watlington. "You talk too much, young man."

"Wait a second," said Wally. "I want to get you all on record. I have made a courteous request——"

"And it has been refused," said old Peebles, blinking at both of us. "Gentlemen, you can't go through!"

"Is that final?"

"It is—absolutely."

And Watlington and Peck nodded.

"Drive, Jim!"

This time it was Hamilton who spoke.

"Pardon me," said Wally. He skipped out in front of the tee, lifted his cap and made a low bow. "Members of the Greens Committee," said he, "and one other hog as yet unclassified, you are witnesses that I default my match to Mr. Curtiss. I do this rather than be forced to play behind four such pitiable dubs as you are. Golf is a gentleman's game, which doubtless accounts for your playing it so poorly. They tell me that you never let any one through. God giving me strength, the day will come when you will not only allow people to pass you, but you will *beg* them to do it. Make a note of that. Come along, Curtiss. We'll play the last nine —for the fun of the thing."

"Oh, Curtiss!" It was Watlington speaking. "How many did you have him down when he quit?"

The insult would have made a saint angry, but no saint on the calendar could have summoned the vocabulary with which Wally replied. It was a wonderful exhibition of blistering invective. Watlington's thick hide stood him in good stead. He did not turn a hair or bat an eye, but waited for Wally to run out of breath. Then:

"Drive, Jim," said he.

Now I did not care to win that match by default, and I did everything in my power to arrange the matter otherwise. I offered to play the remaining holes later in the day, or skip the eighth and begin all square on the ninth tee.

"Nothing doing," said Wally. "You're a good sport, but there are other men still in the tournament, and we're not allowed to concede anything. The default goes, but tell me one thing—why didn't you back me up on that kick?"

I was afraid he had noticed that I had been pretty much in the background throughout, so when he asked me I told him the truth.

"Just a matter of bread and butter," said I. "My uncle's law firm handles all the Midland's business. I'm only the junior member, but I can't afford——"

"The Midland?" asked Wally.

"Yes, the Midland Manufacturing Company —Peck, Peebles and Hamilton. Watlington's money is invested in the concern too."

"Why," said Wally, "that's the entire gang, isn't it—Greens Committee and all?"

"The Big Four," said I. "You can see how it is. They're rather important—as clients. There has been no end of litigation over the site for that new plant of theirs down on Third Avenue, and we've handled all of it."

But Wally hadn't been listening to me.

"So all the eggs are in one basket!" he exclaimed. "That simplifies matters. Now, if

one of 'em had been a doctor and one of 'em a lawyer and one of 'em——"

"What are you talking about?" I demanded.

"Blest if I know!" said Wally.

So far as I could learn no official action was taken by the Big Four because of conduct and language unbecoming a gentleman and a golfer. Before I left the clubhouse I had a word or two with Peebles. He was sitting at a table in the corner of the lounging room, nibbling at a piece of cheese and looking as meek as Moses.

"We—ah—considered the source," said he. "The boy is young and—rash, quite rash. His father was a mule-skinner—it's in the blood—can't help it possibly. Yes, we considered the source. Absolutely!"

I didn't see very much of Wally after that, but I understood that he played the course in the mornings and gave the club a wide berth on Wednesdays and Saturdays. His default didn't help me any. I was handsomely licked in the finals—four and three, I believe it was. About that time something happened which knocked golf completely out of my mind.

IV

I was sitting in my office one morning when Atkinson, of the C. G. & N., called me on the phone. The railroad offices are in the same building, on the floor above ours.

"That you, Curtiss? I'll be right down. I want to see you."

Now, our firm handles the legal end for the C. G. & N., and it struck me that Atkinson's voice had a nervous worried ring to it. I was wondering what could be the matter, when he came breezing in all out of breath.

"You told me," said he, "that there wouldn't be any trouble about that spur track along Third Avenue."

"For the Midland people, you mean? Oh, that's arranged for. All we have to do is appear before the City Council and make the request for a permit. To-morrow morning it comes off. What are you so excited about?"

"This," said Atkinson. He pulled a big red handbill out of his pocket and unfolded it. "Possibly I'm no judge, Curtiss, but this seems to be enough to excite anybody."

I spread the thing out on my desk and took a look at it. Across the top was one of those headlines that hit you right between the eyes:

SHALL THE CITY COUNCIL
LICENSE CHILD MURDER?

Well, that was a fair start, you'll admit, but it went on from there. I don't remember ever reading anything quite so vitriolic. It was a bitter attack on the proposed spur track along Third Avenue, which is the habitat of the down-trodden workingman and the playground of his

children. Judging solely by the handbill, any one would have thought that the main idea of the C. G. & N. was to kill and maim as many toddling infants as possible. The Council was made an accessory before the fact, and the thing wound up with an appeal to class prejudice and a ringing call to arms.

"Men of Third Avenue, shall the City Council give to the bloated bondholders of an impudent monopoly the right to torture and murder your innocent babes? Shall your street be turned into a speedway for a modern car of Juggernaut? Let your answer be heard in the Council Chamber to-morrow morning—'No, a thousand times, no!' "

I read it through to the end. Then I whistled.

"This," said I, "is hot stuff—very hot stuff! Where did it come from?"

"The whole south end of town is plastered with bills like it," said Atkinson glumly. "What have we done now, that they should be picking on us? When have we killed any children, I would like to know? What started this? Who started it? Why?"

"That isn't the big question," said I. "The big question is: Will the City Council stand hitched in the face of this attack?"

The door opened and the answer to that question appeared—Barney MacShane, officially of the rank and file of the City Council of our fair city, in reality the guiding spirit of that body of petty pirates. Barney was moist and nervous,

and he held one of the bills in his right hand. His first words were not reassuring.

"All hell is loose—loose for fair!" said he. "Take a look at this thing."

"We have already been looking at it," said I with a laugh intended to be light and care-free. "What of it? You don't mean to tell me that you are going to let a mere scrap of paper bother you?"

Barney mopped his forehead and sat down heavily.

"You can laugh," said he, "but there is more than paper behind this. The whole west end of town is up in arms overnight, and I don't know why. Nobody ever kicked up such a rumpus about a spur track before. That's my ward, you know, and I just made my escape from a deputation of women and children. They treed me at the City Hall—before all the newspaper men—and they held their babies up in their arms and they dared me—yes, dared me—to let this thing go through. And the election coming on and all. It's hell, that's what it is!"

"But, Barney," I argued, "we are not asking for anything which the city should not be glad to grant. Think what it means to your ward to have this fine big manufacturing plant in it! Think of the men who will have work——"

"I'm thinking of them," said Barney sorrowfully. "They're coming to the Council meeting to-morrow morning, and if this thing goes through I may as well clean out my desk. Yes,

they're coming, and so are their wives and their children, and they'll bring transparencies and banners and God knows what all——"

"But listen, Barney! This plant means prosperity to every one of your people——"

"They're saying they'll make it an issue in the next campaign," mumbled MacShane. "They say that if that spur track goes down on Third Avenue it's me out of public life—and they mean it too. God knows what's got into them all at once—they're like a nest of hornets. And the women voting now too. That makes it bad—awful bad! You know as well as I do that any agitation with children mixed up in it is the toughest thing in the world to meet." He struck at the poster with a sudden spiteful gesture. "From beginning to end," he snarled, "it's just an appeal not to let the railroad kill the kids!"

"But that's nonsense—bunk!" said Atkinson. "Every precaution will be taken to prevent accidents. You've got to think of the capital invested."

Barney rolled a troubled eye in his direction.

"You go down on Third Avenue," said he, "and begin talking to them people about capital! Try it once. What the hell do they care about capital? They was brought up to hate the sound of the word! You know and I know that capital ain't near as black as it's painted, but can you tell them that? Huh! And a rail-

road ain't ever got any friends in a gang standing round on the street corners!"

"But," said I, "this isn't a question of friends—it's a straight proposition of right and wrong. The Midland people have gone ahead and put up this big plant. They were given to understand that there would be no opposition to the spur track going down. They've got to have it! The success of their business depends on it! Surely you don't mean to tell me that the Council will refuse this permit?"

"Well," said Barney slowly, "I've talked with the boys—Carter and Garvey and Dillon. They're all figuring on running again, and they're scared to death of it. Garvey says we'd be damned fools to go against an agitation like this—so close to election, anyhow."

I argued the matter from every angle—the good of the city; the benefit to Barney's ward—but I couldn't budge him.

"They say that the voice of the people is the voice of God," said he, "but we know that most of the time it's only noise. Sometimes the noise kind of dies out, and then's the time to step in and cut the melon. But any kind of noise so close to election? Huh! Safety first!"

Before the meeting adjourned it was augmented by the appearance of the president and vice-president of the Midland Manufacturing Company, Colonel Jim Peck and old Peebles, and never had I seen those stiff-necked gentlemen so humanly agitated.

"This is terrible!" stormed the Colonel. "Terrible! This is unheard of! It is an outrage—a crime—a crying shame to the city! Think of our investment! Other manufacturing plants got their spur tracks for the asking. There was no talk of killing children. Why—why have we been singled out for attack—for—for blackmail?"

"You can cut out that kind of talk right now!" said Barney sternly. "There ain't a nickel in granting this permit, and you know it as well as I do. Nobody ain't trying to blackmail you! All the dough in town won't swing the boys into line behind this proposition while this rumpus is going on. And since you're taking that slant at it, here's the last word—sit tight and wait till after election!"

"But the pl-plant!" bleated Peebles, tearing a blotter to shreds with shaking fingers. "The plant! Think of the loss of time—and we—we expected to open up next month!"

"Go ahead and open up," said Barney. "You can truck your stuff to the depots, can't you? Yes, yes—I get you about the loss! Us boys in the Council—we got something to lose too. Now here it is, straight from the shoulder, and you can bet on it." Barney spoke slowly, wagging his forefinger at each word. "If that application comes up to-morrow morning, with the Council chamber jammed with folks from the south end of the town—good-a-by, John! Fare thee well! It ain't in human nature to

commit political suicide when a second term is making eyes at you. Look at our end of it for a while. We got futures to think of, too, and Garvey—Garvey wants to run for mayor some day. You can't afford to have that application turned down, can you? Of course not. Have a little sense. Keep your shirts on. Get out and see who's behind this thing. Chances are somebody wants something. Find out what it is—rig up a compromise—get him to call off the dogs. Then talk to me again, and I'll promise you it'll go through as slick as a greased pig!"

"I believe there's something in that," said I. "We've never run into such a hornets' nest as this before. There must be a reason. Atkinson, you've got a lot of gumshoe men on your staff. Why don't you turn 'em loose to locate this opposition?"

"You're about two hours late with that suggestion," said the railroad representative. "Our sleuths are on the job now. If they find out anything I'll communicate with you P. D. Q."

"Good!" ejaculated Colonel Peck. "And if it's money——"

"Aw, you make me sick!" snapped Barney MacShane. "You think money can do everything, don't you? Well, it can't! For one thing, it couldn't get me to shake hands with a stiff like you!"

I was called away from the dinner table on

the following Friday evening. Watlington was on the telephone.

"That you, Curtiss? Well, we think we've got in touch with the bug under the chip. Can you arrange to meet us in Room 85 at the Hotel Brookmore at nine to-night? . . . No, I can't tell you a thing about it. We're asked to be there—you're asked to be there—and that's as far as my information goes. Don't be late."

When I entered Room 85 four men were seated at a long table. They were Elsberry J. Watlington, Colonel Jim Peck, Samuel Alexander Peebles and W. Cotton Hamilton. They greeted me with a certain amount of nervous irritability. The Big Four had been through a cruel week and showed the marks of strain.

"Where's Atkinson?" I asked.

"It was stipulated, expressly stipulated," said old Peebles, "that only the five of us should be present. The whole thing is most mysterious. I—I don't like the looks of it."

"Probably a hold-up!" grunted Colonel Peck.

Watlington didn't say anything. He had aged ten years, his heavy smooth-shaven face was set in stern lines and his mouth looked as if it might have been made with a single slash of a razor.

Hamilton mumbled to himself and kept trying to light the end of his thumb instead of his cigar. Peck had his watch in his hand. Peebles played a tattoo on his chin with his fingers.

"Good thing we didn't make that application

at the Council meeting," said Hamilton. "I never saw such a gang of thugs!"

"Male and female!" added Colonel Peck. "Well, time's up! Whoever he is, I hope he won't keep us waiting!"

"Ah!" said a cheerful voice. "You don't like to be held up on the tee, do you, Colonel?"

There in the doorway stood Wally Wallace, beaming upon the Big Four. Not even on the stage have I ever seen anything to match the expressions on the faces round that table. Old Peebles' mouth kept opening and shutting, like the mouth of a fresh caught carp. The others were frozen, petrified. Wally glanced at me as he advanced into the room, and there was a faint trembling of his left eyelid.

"Well," said Wally briskly, "shall we proceed with the business of the meeting?"

"Business!" Colonel Peck exploded like a firecracker.

"With—you?" It was all Watlington could do to tear the two words out of his throat. He croaked like a big bullfrog.

"With me," said Wally, bowing and taking his place at the head of the table. "Unless," he added, "you would prefer to discuss the situation with the rank and file of the Third Avenue Country Club."

The silence which followed that remark was impressive. I could hear somebody's heart beating. It may have been my own. As usual Colonel Peck was first to recover the power of

speech, and again as usual he made poor use of it.

"You—you young whelp!" he gurgled. "So it was——"

"Shut up, Jim!" growled Watlington, whose eyes had never left Wally's face. Hamilton carefully placed his cigar in the ashtray and tried to put a match into his mouth. Then he turned on me, sputtering.

"Are you in on this?" he demanded.

"Be perfectly calm," said Wally. "Mr. Curtiss is not in on it, as you so elegantly express it. I am the only one who is in on it. Me, myself, W. W. Wallace, at your service. If you will favour me with your attention, I will explain——"

"You'd better!" ripped out the Colonel.

"Ah," said the youngster, grinning at Peck, "always a little nervous on the tee, aren't you?"

"Drive, young man!" said Watlington.

A sudden light flickered in Wally's eyes. He turned to Elsberry J. with an expression that was almost friendly.

"Do you know," said he, "I'm beginning to think there may be human qualities in you after all."

Watlington grunted and nodded his head.

"Take the honour!" said he.

Wally rose and laid the tips of his fingers on the table.

"Members of the Greens Committee and one

other''—and here he looked at Hamilton, whose face showed that he had not forgotten the unclassified hog—''we are here this evening to arrange an exchange of courtesies. You think you represent the Midland Manufacturing Company at this meeting. You do not. You represent the Sundown Golf and Country Club. I represent the Third Avenue Country Club—an organisation lately formed. You may have heard something of it, though not under that name.''

He paused to let this sink in.

''Gentlemen,'' he continued, ''you may recall that I once made a courteous request of you for something which was entirely within my rights. You made an arbitrary ruling on that request. You refused to let me through. You told me I was too fresh, and advised me to sit down and cool off. I see by your faces that you recall the occasion.

''You may also recall that I promised to devote myself to the task of teaching you to be more considerate of others. Gentlemen, I am the opposition to your playing through on Third Avenue. I am the Man Behind. I am the Voice of the People. I am a singleton on the course, holding you up while I sink a putt. If you ask me why, I will give you your own words in your teeth: You can't go through because I don't want you to go through.''

Here he stopped long enough to light a cigarette, and again his left eyelid flickered, though

he did not look at me. I think if he had I should have erupted.

"You see," said he, flipping the match into the air, "it has been necessary to teach you a lesson—the lesson, gentlemen, of courtesy on the course, consideration for others. I realised that this could never be done on a course where you have power to make the rules—or break them. So I selected another course. Members of the Greens Committee and one other, you do not make the rules on Third Avenue. You are perfectly within your rights in asking to go through; but I have blocked you. I have made you sit down on the bench and cool off. Gentlemen, how do you like being held up when you want to play through? How does it feel?"

I do not regret my inability to quote Colonel Peck's reply to this question.

"Quit it, Jim!" snapped Watlington. "Your bark was always worse than your bite, and it's not much of a bark at that—'Sound and fury, signifying nothing.' Young man, I take it you are the chairman of the Greens Committee of this Third Avenue Country Club, empowered to act. May I ask what are our chances of getting through?"

"I *know* I'm going to like you—in time!" exclaimed Wally. "I feel it coming on. Let's see, to-morrow is Saturday, isn't it?"

"What's that got to do with it?" mumbled Hamilton.

"Much," answered Wally. "Oh, much, I as-

sure you! I expect to be at the Sundown Club to-morrow." His chin shot out and his voice carried the sting of a lash. "I expect to see you gentlemen there, playing your usual crawling foursome. I expect to see you allowing your fellow members to pass you on the course. You might even invite them to come through—you might *insist* on it, courteously, you understand, and with such grace as you may be able to muster. I want to see every member of that club play through you—every member!"

"All d-damned nonsense!" bleated Peebles, sucking his fingers.

"Shut up!" ordered Watlington savagely. "And, young man, if we do this—what then?"

"Ah, then!" said Wally. "Then the reward of merit. If you show me that you can learn to be considerate of others—if you show me that you can be courteous on the course where you make the rules—I feel safe in promising that you will be treated with consideration on this other course which has been mentioned. Yes, quite safe. In fact, gentlemen, you may even be *asked* to play through on Third Avenue!"

"But this agitation?" began Hamilton.

"Was paid for by the day," smiled the brazen rascal, with a graceful inclination of his head. "People may be hired to do anything—even to annoy prominent citizens and frighten a City Council." Hamilton stirred uneasily, but Wally read his thought and froze him with a single keen glance. "Of course," said he, "you

understand that what has been done once may be done again. Sentiment crystallises—when helped out with a few more red handbills—a few more speeches on the street corners——"

"The point is well taken!" interrupted Watlington hurriedly. "Damn well taken! Young man, talk to me. *I'm* the head of this outfit. Pay no attention to Jim Peck. He's nothing but a bag of wind. Hamilton doesn't count. His nerves are no good. Peebles—he's an old goat. *I'm* the one with power to act. Talk to me. Is there anything else you want?"

"Nothing," said Wally. "I think your streak of consideration is likely to prove a lasting one. If not—well, I may have to spread this story round town a bit——"

"Oh, my Lord!" groaned Colonel Peck.

It was a noble and inspiring sight to see the Big Four, caps in hand, inviting the common people to play through. The entire club marched through them—too full of amazement to demand explanations. Even Purdue McCormick, trudging along with a putter in one hand and a mid-iron in the other, without a bag, without a caddie, without a vestige of right in the wide world, even Purdue was coerced into passing them. At dusk he was found wandering aimlessly about on the seventeenth fairway, babbling to himself. We fear that he will never be the same again.

I have received word from Barney MacShane

that the City Council will be pleased to grant a permit to lay a spur track on Third Avenue. The voice of the people, he says, has died away to a faint murmuring. Some day I think I will tell Barney the truth. He does not play golf, but he has a sense of humour.

LITTLE POISON IVY

I

THE leopard cannot change his spots—possibly he wouldn't if he could; and, this being the case, the next best thing is to overlook as many of his freckles as possible.

Yesterday I sat on the porch at the Country Club and listened while the Dingbats said kind and complimentary things about young Ambrose Phipps, alias Little Poison Ivy, alias The Pest, alias Rough and Reddy. One short week ago the Dingbats would have voted him a nuisance and a menace to society in general. Yesterday they praised him to the skies. It just goes to show that good can be found in anybody—if that is what you are looking for.

Understand me: there has been no change in Ambrose. He is still as fresh as a mountain breeze. Unquestionably he will continue to treat his elders with a shocking lack of respect and an entire absence of consideration. He was born with a deep depression where his bump

of reverence should have been located, and neither realises nor regrets his deficiency.

He will never change. It is the Dingbats who have changed. The whole club has changed, so far as Ambrose is concerned.

We are all trying to overlook the dark spots in his character and see good in him, whether it is there or not.

Now as to the Dingbats: if you do not know them you have missed something rich and rare in the golfing line. There are four of them, all retired capitalists on the shady side of sixty. They freely admit that they are the worst golfers in the world, and in a pinch they could prove it. They play together six days a week—a riotous, garrulous, hilarious foursome, ripping the course wide open from the first tee to the home green; and they get more real fun out of golf than any men I know. They never worry about being off their game, because they have never been on it; they know they can be no worse than they are and they have no hope of ever being better; they expect to play badly, and it is seldom that they are disappointed. Whenever a Dingbat forgets to count his shots in the bunkers, and comes home in the nineties, a public celebration takes place on the clubhouse porch.

Yesterday it was Doc Pinkinson who brought in the ninety-eight—and signed all the tags; and between libations they talked about Ambrose

Phipps, who was practising brassy shots off the grass beside the eighteenth green.

Little Poison Ivy was unusually cocky, even for him, and every move was a picture. At the end of his follow-through he would freeze, nicely balanced on the tip of his right toe, elbows artistically elevated, clubhead up round his neck; and not a muscle would he move until the ball stopped rolling. He might have been posing for a statue of the Perfect Golfer. When he walked it was with a conscious little swagger and a flirting of the short tails of his belted sport coat. He was hitting them clean, he was hitting them far, he had an audience—and well he knew it. Ambrose was in his glory yesterday afternoon!

"By golly!" exclaimed Doc Pinkinson. "Ain't that a pretty sight? Ain't it a treat to see that kid lambaste the ball?"

"Certainly is," agreed Old Treanor with a sigh. "Perfect form—that's what he's got."

"And confidence in himself," put in Old Myles. "That's the big secret. You can see it in every move he makes. Confidence is a wonderful thing!"

"And youth," said Daddy Bradshaw. "That's the most wonderful thing of all. It's his youth that makes him so—so flip. Got a lot to say, for a kid; but—somehow I always liked him for it."

"Me too!" chimed in Doc Pinkinson. "Dog-gone his skin! He used to make me awful mad,

that boy. . . . Oh, well, I reckon I'm kind of cranky, anyway. . . . Yes; I always liked Ambrose."

Now that was all rot, and I knew it. What's more, the Dingbats knew it too. They hadn't always liked Ambrose. A week ago they would have marked his swaggering gait, the tilt of his chin, the conscious manner in which he posed after every shot; and they would have said Ambrose was showing off for the benefit of the female tea party at the other end of the porch—and they wouldn't have made any mistake, at that.

No; they hadn't always liked young Mr. Phipps. Nobody had liked him. To be perfectly frank about it, we had disliked him openly and cordially, and had been at no pains to keep him from finding it out. We had snubbed him, insulted him and ignored him on every possible occasion. Worst of all, we had made a singleton of him. We had forced him to play alone, because there wasn't a man in all the club who wanted him as a partner or as an opponent. There is no meaner treatment than this; nor is there anything more pathetically lonely than a singleton on a crowded golf course. It is nothing more or less than a grown-up trip to Coventry. I thought of all these things as I listened to the prattling of the Dingbats.

"Guess he won't have any trouble getting games now, hey?" chuckled Old Treanor.

"Huh!" grunted Doc Pinkinson. "He's dated

up a week ahead—with Moreman and that bunch! *A week ahead!*"

"And he'll make 'em step!" chirped Daddy Bradshaw. "Here's to him, boys—a redhead and a fighter! Drink her down!"

"A redhead and a fighter!" chorused the Dingbats, lifting their glasses.

Yes; they drank to Ambrose Phipps, and one short week ago they wouldn't have tolerated him on the same side of the course with them. Our pet leopard still has his spots, but we are now viewing him in the friendly shade cast by a battered old silver cup: namely and to wit, the Edward B. Wimpus Team Trophy, permanently at home on the mantelpiece in the lounging room.

II

Going back to the beginning, we never had a chance to blame Ambrose on the Membership Committee; he slipped in on us via the junior-member clause. Old Man Phipps does not play golf; but he is a charter member of the club and, according to the by-laws, the sons of members between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one enjoy all the privileges of the institution.

Ambrose was nineteen when he returned rather hurriedly from college. He did this at the earnest and unanimous request of the Faculty and, it was whispered, the police department of the university town. He hadn't done much of anything, but he had tried very hard

to drive a touring car and seven chorus girls through a plate-glass window into a restaurant. The press agent of the show saw his chance to get some publicity for the broilers, and after an interview with the Faculty Ambrose caught the first train for home.

Having nothing to do and plenty of time in which to do it, Ambrose decided to become a golfer. Old Dunn'l MacQuarrie, our professional, sold him a large leather bag full of tools and gave him two lessons. Thus equipped and fortified, young Mr. Phipps essayed to brighten our drab lives by allowing us to play golf with him. Now this sort of thing may be done in some clubs, but not in ours. We do not permit our sacred institutions to be "rushed" by the golfing novice. We are not snobbish, but we plead guilty to being the least bit set in our ways. They are good ways, and they suit us. The club is an old one, as golf clubs go in this country, and most of the playing members are men past forty years of age. Nearly all of the foursomes are permanent affairs, the same men playing together week after week, season in and season out. The other matches are made in advance, by telephone or word of mouth, and the member who turns up minus a game on Saturday afternoon is out of luck.

We do not leap at the stranger with open arms. We do not leap at him at all. We stand off and look him over. We put him on probation; and if he shapes up well, and walks lightly,

and talks softly, and does not try to dynamite his way into matches where he is not wanted, some day he will be invited to fill up a foursome. Invited—make a note of that. Now see what Ambrose did.

With his customary lack of tact, he selected the very worst day in the week to thrust himself upon our notice. It was a Saturday, and the lounging room was crowded with members, most of whom were shaking dice for the luncheons. With a single exception, all the foursomes were made up for the afternoon.

A short, sturdily built youngster came through the doorway from the locker room and paused close to the table where I was sitting. His hair was red—the sort of red that will not be ignored—and he wore it combed straight back over the top of his head. His slightly irregular features were covered with large brown freckles, and on his upper lip was a volunteer crop of lightish fuzz, which might, in time, become a moustache. His green sport coat was new, his flannel trousers were new, his shoes were new—from neck to sole he fairly shrieked with newness. Considering that he was a stranger in a strange club, a certain amount of reticence would not have hurt the young man's entrance; but he burst through the swinging door with a skip and a swagger, and there was a broad grin on his homely countenance. It was quite evident that he expected to find himself among friends.

"Who wants a game?" he cried. "Don't all speak at once, men!"

A few of the members nearest the door glanced up, eyed the youth curiously, and returned to their dice boxes. The others had not heard him at all. Harson and Billford looked at me.

"Who's the fresh kid?" asked Billford.

"That," said I, "is Ambrose Phipps, only son of Old Man Phipps."

"Humph!" grunted Harson. "The living, breathing proof that marriage is a failure. What's he want?"

Ambrose himself answered the question. He had advanced to our table.

"You gentlemen got a game?" he asked, laying his hand on Billford's shoulder.

Now if there is anything that Billford loathes and detests, it is familiarity on short acquaintance. He hadn't even met this fresh youth; so he shrugged his shoulder in a very pointed manner and glared at Ambrose. The boy did not remove his hand.

" 'S all right, old top," said he reassuringly. "It's clean—just washed it. Clean as your shirt." He bent down and looked at Billford's collar. "No," said he; "cleaner. . . . Well, how about it? Got your game fixed up?"

"We are waiting for a fourth man." I answered because Billford didn't seem able to say anything; he looked on the point of exploding.

"Oh, a fourth man, eh? Well, if he doesn't

turn up you know me." And Ambrose passed on to the next table.

"Insufferable young rotter!" snarled Billford.

"Quite so," said Harson; "but he'll never miss anything by being too bashful to ask for it. Look! He's asking everybody!"

Ambrose made the entire circuit of the room. We could not hear what he said, but we felt the chill he left in his wake. Men glanced up when he addressed them, stared for an instant, and went back to their dice. Some of them were polite in their refusals, some were curt, some were merely disgusted. When he reached the table where Bishop, Gilmore, Moreman and Elder were sitting, they laughed at him. They are our star golfers and members of the team. The Dingbats were too much astonished to show resentment; but when Ambrose left them he patted Doc Pinkinson on the head, and the old gentleman sputtered for the best part of an hour.

It was a discouraging tour, and any one else would have hunted a quiet corner and crawled into it; but not Ambrose. He returned to our end of the room, and the pleased and expectant light in his eyes had given way to a steely glare. He beckoned to one of the servants.

"Hey, George! Who's the boss here? Who's the Big Finger?"

"Misteh Harson, he's one of 'em, suh. He's a membeh of the Greens Committee."

"Show him to me!"

"Right there, suh, settin' by the window."

Ambrose strode across to us and addressed himself to Harson.

"My name is Phipps," said he. "I'm a junior member here, registered and all that, and I want to get a game this afternoon. So far, I haven't had any luck."

Harson is really a mild and kindly soul. He hates to hurt any one's feelings.

"Perhaps all the games are made up," he suggested. "Saturday is a bad day, unless your match is arranged beforehand."

"Zat so? Humph! Nice clubby spirit you have here. You make a fellow feel so much at home!"

"So we notice," grunted Billford.

Ambrose looked at him and smiled. It wasn't exactly a pleasant smile. Then he turned back to Harson.

"How about that fourth man of yours?" he demanded. "Has he shown up yet?"

Billford caught my eye.

"Some one must have left the outside door open," said he. "Seems to me I feel a strong draught."

"Put on another shirt!" Ambrose shot the retort without an instant's hesitation. "Now say, if your fourth man isn't here, what's the matter with me?"

"Possibly there is nothing the matter with

you," said Harson pleasantly; "but if you are a beginner——"

"Aw, you don't need to be afraid of my game!" grinned Ambrose. "I'll be easy picking."

"That isn't the point," explained Harson. "Our game would be too fast for you."

"Well, what of it? How am I ever going to learn if I never play with anybody better than I am? Don't you take any interest in young blood, or is this a close corporation, run for the benefit of a lot of old fossils, playing hooky from the boneyard?"

"Oh, run away, little boy, and sell your papers!" Billford couldn't stand it any longer.

"I will if you lend me that shirt for a make-up!" snapped Ambrose. "Now don't get mad, Cutie. Remember, you picked on me first. A man with a neck as thick as yours ought not to let his angry passions rise. First thing you know, you'll bust something in that bonemeal mill of yours, and then you won't know anything." Ambrose put his hands on his hips and surveyed the entire gathering. "A nice, cheerful, clubby bunch!" he exclaimed. "Gee! What a picnic a hermit crab could have in this place, meeting so many congenial souls!"

"If you don't like it," said Billford, "you don't have to stay here a minute."

"That's mighty sweet of you," said Ambrose; "but, you see, I've made up my mind to learn this fool game if it takes all summer. I'd hate

to quit now, even to oblige people who have been so courteous to me. . . . Well, good-by, you frozen stiffs! Maybe I can hire that sour old Scotchman to go round with me. He's not what you might call a cheerful companion, but, at that, he's got something on you. He's *human,* anyway!"

Ambrose went outside and banged the door behind him. Billford made a few brief observations; but his remarks, though vivid and striking, were not quite original. Harson shook his head, and in the silence following Ambrose's exit we heard Doc Pinkinson's voice:

"If that pup was mine I'd drown him; doggone me if I wouldn't!"

Young Mr. Phipps, you will observe, got in wrong at the very start.

III

Bad news travels fast when a few press agents get behind it, and not all the personal publicity is handed out by a man's loving friends. Those who had met Ambrose warned those who had not, and whenever his fiery red head appeared in the lounging room there was a startling drop in the temperature.

For a few weeks he persisted in trying to secure matches with members of the club, but nobody would have anything to do with him—not even old Purdue McCormick, who toddles about the course with a niblick in one hand and

a midiron in the other, *sans* bag, *sans* caddie, *sans* protection of the game laws. When such a renegade as Purdue refused to go turf-tearing with him Ambrose gave up in disgust and devoted himself to the serious business of learning the royal and ancient game. He infested the course from dawn till dark, a solitary figure against the sky line; our golfing Ishmael, a wild ass loose upon the links, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him.

He wore a chip on his shoulder for all of us; and it was during this period that Anderson, our club champion and Number One on the team, christened Ambrose "Little Poison Ivy," because of the irritating effect of personal contact with him.

Ambrose couldn't have had a great deal of fun out of the situation; but MacQuarrie made money out of it. The redhead hired the professional to play with him and criticise his shots. The dour old Scotch mercenary did not like Ambrose any better than we did, but toward the end of the first month he admitted to me that the boy had the makings of a star golfer, though not, he was careful to explain, "the pr-roper temperament for the game."

"But it's just amazin', the way he picks up the shots," said Dunn'l. "Ay, he'll have everything but the temperament."

As the summer drew to a close the annual team matches began, and we forgot Ambrose

and all else in our anxiety over the fate of the Edward B. Wimpus Trophy.

Every golf club, you must know, has its pet trophy. Ours is the worn old silver cup that represents the team championship of the Association. A pawnbroker wouldn't look at it twice; but to us, who are familiar with its history and the trips it has made to different clubhouses, the Edward B. Wimpus Trophy is priceless, and more to be desired than diamonds or pearls.

When the late Mr. Wimpus donated the cup he stipulated that it should be held in trust by the club winning the annual team championship, and that it should become the property of the club winning it three times in succession. For twenty years we had been fighting for permanent possession of the trophy, and engraved on its shining surface was the record of our bitter disappointment—not to mention the disappointment of the Bellevue Golf Club. Twice we had been in a position to add the third and final victory, and twice the Bellevue quintet had dashed our hopes. Twice we had retaliated by preventing them from retiring the Wimpus Trophy from competition; and now, with two winning years behind us and a third opportunity in sight, we talked and thought of nothing else.

According to the rules governing team play in our Association, each club is represented by five men, contesting from scratch and without

handicaps of any sort. In the past, two teams have outclassed the field, and once more history repeated itself, for the Bellevue bunch fought us neck and neck through the entire period of competition. With one match remaining to be played, they were tied with us for first place, and that match brought the Bellevue team to our course last Friday afternoon.

I was on hand when the visitors filed into the locker room at noon—MacNeath, Smathers, Crane, Lounsberry and Jordan—five seasoned and dependable golfers, veterans of many a hard match; fighters who never know when they are beaten. They looked extremely fit, and not in the least worried at the prospect of meeting our men on their own course.

They brought their own gallery, too, Bellevue members who talked even money and flashed yellow-backed bills. The Dingbats formed a syndicate and covered all bets; but this was due to club pride rather than any feeling of confidence. We knew our boys were in for a tough battle, in which neither side would have a marked advantage.

Four of our team players were on hand to welcome the enemy—Moreman, Bishop, Elder and Gilmore—and they offered their opponents such hospitality as is customary on like occasions.

"Thanks," said MacNeath with a grin; "but just now we're drinking water. After the match you can fill the cup with anything you like, and

we'll allow you one drink out of it before we take it home with us. Once we get it over there it'll never come back. It's not in the cards for you to win three times running. . . . Where's Anderson?"

"He hasn't shown up yet," said Bishop.

"He's on the way out in his car," added Moreman. "I rang up his house five minutes ago. He'd just left."

"Oh, very well," said MacNeath, who is Number One man for Bellevue, as well as captain of the team. "Suppose we have lunch now, Bishop; and while we're eating you can give me the list of your players and I'll match them up."

In team play it is customary for the home captain to submit the names of his players, ranked from one to five, in the order of their ability. The visiting captain then has the privilege of making the individual matches; and this is supposed to offset whatever advantage the home team has by reason of playing on its own course.

Bishop, our captain, handed over a list reading as follows: 1—Anderson; 2—Moreman; 3—Bishop; 4—Elder; 5—Gilmore. MacNeath bracketed his own name with Anderson's, and paired Crane with Moreman, Lounsberry with Bishop, Smathers with Elder, and Jordan with Gilmore.

After luncheon the men changed to their golfing togs; but still there was no sign of Ander-

son. Another telephone call confirmed the first message; his wife reported that he had left his home nearly an hour before, bound for the club.

"Queer!" said MacNeath. "Engine trouble or a puncture—possibly both. It's not like the Swede to be late. Might as well get started, eh? Anderson and I will go last, anyhow."

A big gallery watched the first pair drive off, Gilmore getting a better ball than Jordan, and cheering those who believe in omens. Then at five-minute intervals, came Lounsberry and Bishop, Smathers and Elder, and Crane and Moreman. Each match attracted a small individual gallery, but most of the spectators waited to follow the Number One men. MacNeath, refusing to allow himself to be made nervous by the delay, went into the clubhouse; and many and wild were the speculations as to the cause of Anderson's tardiness. The wildest one of them fell short of the bitter truth, which came to us at the end of a telephone wire located in the professional's shop. It had been relayed on from the switchboard in the club office:

"Anderson blew a front tire at the city limits. Car turned over with him and broke his leg."

A bombshell exploding under our noses could not have created more consternation. There we were, with four of the matches under way, our best man crippled, and up against the proposition of providing an opponent for MacNeath, admittedly the most dangerous player on the

Bellevue team. Harson, as a member of the Greens Committee and an officer of the club, assumed charge of the situation as soon as he heard the news.

"No good sending word to poor old Bishop," said he. "He's the team captain, of course; but he can't do anything about it. Besides, he's already playing his match, and this would upset him terribly. Is there any one here who can give MacNeath a run for his money?"

"Not unless you want to try it," said I.

"He'd eat me alive!" groaned Harson. "We might as well forfeit one match, and put it up to the boys to win three out of four. Oh, if we only had one more good man!"

"Ye have," said MacQuarrie, who had been listening. "Ye've overlooked young Mister Phipps."

"That kid?" demanded Harson. "Nonsense!"

"Ay," said Dunn'l; "that kid! Call it nonsense if ye like, sir, but he was under eighty twice yesterday. This mor-rnin' he shot a seventy-seven, with two missed putts the length o' your ar-rm. He's on top of his game now, an' goin' strong. If he'll shoot back to his morrnin' round he'll give Mister MacNeath a battle; but the lad has never been in a competition, so ye'll have to chance his ner-rves."

"Ambrose!" I exclaimed. "I never should have thought of him!"

"Of course ye wouldn't," said MacQuarrie.

"Ye've never played with him—never even seen him play."

"But he's such a little rotter!" mumbled Harson.

"Ay," said Dunn'l; "an', grantin' ye that, he's still the best ye have. He's in the clubhouse now, dressed an' ready to start, once the crowd is out of the way."

"And he really did a seventy-seven this morning?" asked Harson.

"With two missed putts—wee ones."

I looked at Harson and Harson looked at me.

"You go in and put it up to him," said he at last. "I can't talk to him without losing my temper."

I found our little red hope banging the balls about on the billiard table, carefree as a scarlet tanager.

"Young man," said I, "your country calls you."

"I'm under age," said Ambrose, calmly squinting along his cue. "Don't bother me. This is a tough shot."

"Well, then," said I, "your club calls you."

"My club, eh?" remarked the redhead with nasty emphasis. "Any time this club calls me I'm stone-deaf."

"Listen to me a minute, Phipps. This is the day of the big team match and we're up against it hard. Anderson turned his car over on the way out and broke his leg. We want you to take his place."

"Anderson," repeated Ambrose. "Ain't that the squarehead who calls me Little Poison Ivy? Only his leg, eh? Tough luck!"

"You bet it is!" I exclaimed, ignoring his meaning. "Tough luck for all of us, because if we can't dig up a man to take Anderson's place we'll have to forfeit that particular match to MacNeath. We'd set our hearts on winning this time, because it would give us the permanent possession of the team trophy that we've been shooting at for twenty years——"

"Let your voice fall right there!" commanded Ambrose. "Trophies are nothing in my young life. This club is nothing in my life. Everybody here has treated me worse than a yellow dog. Go ahead and take your medicine; and I hope they lick you and make you like it!"

I saw it was time to try another tack. Ambrose had used one word that had put an idea into my head.

"All right," said I. "Have it your own way. Perhaps it was a mistake to mention MacNeath's name."

"What do you mean—a mistake?" He fired up instantly.

"Well," said I, "you must know Mac by reputation. He's one of the best golfers in the state and a tough proposition to beat. He's their Number One man—their star player. He shoots pretty close to par all the time."

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Ambrose.

"Why, nothing; only——"

"Only what?"

"Well, they all said you wouldn't want to go up against such a strong player."

"Who said that?"

"Oh, everybody. Yes; it was a mistake to mention his name. I'm frank enough to say that I wouldn't tackle him without a handicap. MacNeath is hard game."

"Look here!" snapped the redhead. "You're off on the wrong foot entirely. You're barking up the wrong tree. It's not because I'm afraid of this MacNeath, or anybody else. I licked that sour old Scotchman this morning, and I guess you'll agree he's not soft picking. It's just that I don't feel that this club ought to ask a favour of me."

"A favour! Why, man alive, it's a compliment to stick you in at Number One—the biggest compliment we can pay you!"

"Well," said Ambrose slowly, "if you look at it in that light——"

"I most certainly do. . . . But if you'd rather not meet MacNeath——"

Ambrose dropped his cue with a crash.

"You don't really think I'm *yellow,* do you?" he cried.

"If you are," said I, "you're the first redhead that ever got his colour scheme mixed."

The little rascal grinned like a gargoyle.

"Listen!" said he confidentially. "You've used me pretty well—to my face, anyhow—and

I'll tell you this much: I don't care the snap of my fingers for your ratty old cup. I care even less for the members of this club—present company excepted, you understand; but I can't stand it to have anybody think I'm not *game*. Ever since I was a runt of a kid I've had to fight, and they can say anything about me except that I'm a quitter. . . . Why, I've stuck round here for nearly five months just because I wouldn't let a lot of old fossils drive me out and make me quit—five months without a friend in the place, and only MacQuarrie to talk to.

"If I'd been yellow it would have shown that first Saturday when everybody turned me down so cold. I wanted to walk out and never come back. I wanted to; but I stuck. Honest, if I'm anything at all I'm game—game enough to stand the gaff and take the worst of it; and I'll prove it to you by playing this bird, no matter how good he is. I'll fight him every jump of the way, and if he licks me he'll have to step out some to do it. What's a licking, anyway? I've had a thousand of 'em! Plenty of people can lick me; but you bet your life nobody ever scared me!"

"Good kid!" said I, and held out my hand.

After an instant's hesitation Ambrose seized it. "Now lead me to this MacNeath person," said he. "I suppose we ought to be introduced, eh? Or has he been told that I'm the Country Club leper?"

It was a sorely disappointed gallery that welcomed the substitute—disappointed and amazed; but the few Bellevue members were openly jubilant. They had reason to be, for word had been brought back to them that Lounsberry and Crane were running away with their matches. Between them and the cup they saw only a golfing novice, a junior member without a war record. They immediately began offering odds of two to one on the MacNeath-Phipps match; but there were no takers. The Dingbats held a lodge of sorrow in the shade of the caddie house and mournfully estimated their losses, while our feminine contingent showed signs of retreating to the porch and spending the afternoon at bridge.

MacNeath was first on the tee—a tall, flat-muscled, athletic man of forty; and, as the veteran was preparing to drive, Ambrose and MacQuarrie held a whispered conversation.

"I'd like to grab some of that two to one," said the boy.

"Don't be foolish," counselled the canny Scot. "Ye'll have enough on your mind wi'out makin' bets; an' for pity's sake, remember what I've told ye—slow back, don't press, keep your head down, an' count three before ye look up. Hit them like ye did this mor-rnin' an' ye've a grand chance to win."

MacNeath sent his usual tee shot straight down the course, a long, well-placed ball; and

Ambrose stepped forward in the midst of a silence that was almost painful.

"Mighty pretty," said he with a careless nod at his opponent. "Hope I do as well."

"Ye can," muttered old Dunn'l, "if ye'll keep your fool mouth shut an' your eye on the ball!"

As Ambrose stooped to arrange his tee he caught a glimpse of the gallery—a long, triple row of spectators, keenly interested in his next move—expectant, anxious, apprehensive. Something of the mental attitude of the audience communicated itself to the youngster, and he paused for an instant, crouched on one knee. When he rose all the nonchalant ease was gone from his manner, all the cocksureness out of his eyes. He looked again at MacNeath's ball, a white speck far down the fairway. MacQuarrie groaned and shook his head.

"Never mind that one!" he whispered to himself savagely. "Play the one on the tee!"

Ambrose fidgeted as he took his stance, shifted his weight from one foot to the other, and his first practise swing was short and jerky. He seemed to realise this, for he tried again before he stepped forward to the ball. It was no use; the result was the same. He had suddenly stiffened in every muscle and joint—gone tense with the nervous strain. He did manage to remember about the back swing—it was slow enough to suit anybody; but at the top of it he faltered, hesitating just long enough to destroy the rhythm that produces a perfect shot. He

realised this, too, and tried to make up for it by lunging desperately at the ball; but as the club-face went through he jerked up his head and turned it sharply to the left. The inevitable penalty for this triple error was a wretchedly topped ball, which skipped along the ground until it reached the bunker.

"Well, by the sweet and suffering——"

This was as far as Ambrose got before he remembered that he had a gallery. He scuttled off the tee, very much abashed; and MacNeath followed, covering the ground with long, even strides. There was just the thin edge of a smile on the veteran's lean, bronzed face.

Moved by a common impulse, the spectators turned their backs and began to drift across the lawn to the Number Ten tee. They had seen quite enough. Old Doc Pinkinson voiced the general sentiment:

"No use following a bad match when you can see a good one, folks. Gilmore and Jordan are just driving off at Ten. I knew that redhead was a fizzer—a false alarm."

"Can't understand why they let him play at all!" scolded Daddy Bradshaw. "Might just as well put *me* in there against MacNeath! Fools!"

MacQuarrie obstinately refused to quit his pupil.

"He boggled his swing," growled Dunn'l; "he fair jumped at the ball, an' he looked up

before he hit it. He'll do better wi'out a gallery. Come along, sir!"

I followed as far as the first bunker. Though his ball was half buried in the sand, Ambrose attempted to skim it over the wall with a mashie, an idiotic thing to do, and an all but impossible shot. He got exactly what his lunacy deserved—a much worse lie than before, close against the bank—and this exhibition of poor judgment cost him half his audience.

"What, not going already?" asked Ambrose after he had played four and picked up his ball. "Stick round a while. This is going to be *good.*"

I said I wanted to see how the other matches were coming on.

"Everybody seems to feel the same way," said the redhead, looking at the retreating gallery. "All because I slopped that drive! I'll have that audience back again—see if I don't! And I'll bet you I won't look up on another shot all day!"

"If ye do," grumbled MacQuarrie, "I'll never play wi' ye again as long as ye live!"

"That's a promise!" cried Ambrose. "One down, eh? Where do we go from here?"

IV

Our team veterans did not lack sympathetic encouragement on the last nine holes, and all four matches tightened up to such an extent

that we wavered between hope and fear until Crane's final putt on the seventeenth green dropped us into the depths of despair.

Gilmore, setting the pace with Jordan, gave us early encouragement by maintaining a safe lead throughout and winning his match, 3 to 2. First blood was ours, but the period of rejoicing was a short one; for the deliberate Lounsberry, approaching and putting with heart-breaking accuracy, disposed of Bishop on the seventeenth green.

"One apiece," said Doc Pinkinson. "Now what's Elder doing?"

The Elder-Smathers match came to Number Seventeen all square; but our man ended the suspense by dropping a beautiful mashie pitch dead to the pin from a distance of one hundred yards. Smathers' third shot also reached the green; but his long putt went wide and Elder tapped the ball into the cup, adding a second victory to our credit.

"It's looking better every minute!" chirped the irrepressible Doc Pinkinson. "Now if Moreman can lick his man we're all hunky-dory. If he loses—good-a-by, cup! No use figuring on that red-headed snipe of a kid. MacNeath has sent him to the cleaner's by now, sure!"

The gallery waited at the seventeenth green, watching in anxious silence as Crane and Moreman played their pitch shots over the guarding bunker. Both were well on in threes; but the Bellevue caddie impudently held his forefinger

in the air as a sign that his man was one up. Moreman made a good try, but his fourth shot stopped a few inches from the cup; and Crane, after studying the roll of the green for a full minute, dropped a forty-foot putt for a four—and dropped our spirits with it.

"That settles it!" wheezed Daddy Bradshaw. "No need to bother about that other match. . . . Oh, if Anderson was so set on breaking his leg, why didn't he wait till to-morrow?"

"Then he could have busted 'em both," remarked the unfeeling Pinkinson, "and nobody would have said a word. Might's well pay those bets, I reckon. We got as much chance as that snowball they're always talking about. If it didn't melt, somebody would eat it."

He turned and looked back along the course. Two figures appeared on the skyline, proceeding in the direction of the sixteenth tee. The first one was tall, and moved with long, even strides; the second was short, and even at the distance it seemed to strut and swagger.

"Hello!" ejaculated Pinkinson. "Ain't that MacNeath and the kid, going to Sixteen? It is, by golly! D'you reckon they're playing out the bye holes just for fun—or what?"

"It can't be anything else," said Bradshaw. "The boy couldn't have carried him that far."

Somebody plucked at my sleeve. It was a small dirty-faced caddie, very much out of breath.

"Mister Phipps says—if you want to see—

some reg'lar golf—you'd better catch the finish —of his match. He says—bring all the gang with you."

"The finish of his match!" I cried. "Isn't it over? You don't mean that they're still playing?"

"Still playin' is right!" panted the caddie. "They was all square—when I left 'em."

All square! Like a flash the news ran through the gallery. The various groups, already drifting disconsolately in the direction of the clubhouse, halted and began buzzing with excitement and incredulity. All square? Nonsense! It couldn't be true. A green kid like that holding MacNeath to an even game for fifteen holes? Rot! But, in spite of the doubts so openly expressed, there was a brisk and general movement backward along the course, with the sixteenth putting green as an objective point.

It was a much augmented gallery that lined the side hill above the contestants. All the other team members were there, our men surprised and skeptical, and the Bellevue players nervous and apprehensive. There was also a troop of idle caddies, who had received the word by some mysterious wireless of their own devising.

"MacNeath is down in four," whispered one of the youngsters; "and Reddy has got to sink this one."

Ambrose's ball was four feet from the cup. He walked up to it, took one look at the line, one at the hole, and made the shot without an

instant's hesitation—a clean, firm tap that gave the ball no chance to waver, but sent it squarely into the middle of the cup. MacQuarrie himself could not have shown more confidence. MacNeath's caddie replaced the flag in the hole, dropped both hands to his hips, and moved them back and forth in a level, sweeping gesture. His sign language answered the question uppermost in every mind. Still all square! A patter of applause gave thanks for the information and Ambrose looked up at us with a quizzical grin. I caught his eye, and the rascal winked at me.

He was first on the seventeenth tee, and this time there was no sign of nervous tension. After a single powerful practise swing he stepped forward to his ball, pressed the sole of his club lightly behind it, and got off a tremendous tee shot. I noticed that his lips moved; and he did not raise his head until the ball was well down the course.

"He's countin' three before he looks up!" whispered a voice in my ear; and there was MacQuarrie, the butt of a dead cigar between his teeth, and his eyes alive with all the emotions a Scot may feel but can never express in words.

"Then he's really been playing good golf?" I asked.

"Ay. Grand golf! They both have. It's a dingdong match, an' just a question which one will crack fir-rst."

MacNeath's drive held out no hope that he was about to crack under the strain of an even

battle. He executed the tee shot with the machinelike precision of the veteran golfer—stance, swing and follow-through standardised by years of experience.

Our seventeenth hole is a long one, par 5, and the approach to the putting green is guarded by an embankment, paralleled on the far side by a wide and treacherous sand trap, put there to encourage clean mashie pitches. The average player cannot reach the bunker on his second, much less carry the sand trap on the other side of it; but the long drivers sometimes string two tremendous wooden-club shots together and reach the edge of the green. More frequently they get into trouble and pay the penalty for attempting too much.

The two balls were close together; but Ambrose's shot was the longer one by a matter of feet, and it was up to MacNeath to play first. Would he gamble and go for the green, or would he play short and make sure of a five? The veteran estimated the distance, looked carefully at his lie, and then pulled an iron from his bag. Instantly I knew what was passing in his mind—sensed his golfing strategy: MacNeath intended to place his second shot short of the bunker, in the hope that Ambrose would be tempted into risking the long, dangerous wooden-club shot across to the green.

"Aha!" whispered MacQuarrie. "The old fox! He'll not take a chance himself, but he wants the lad to take one. ' "Will ye walk into

my parlour?'' says the spider to the fly.' Ay; that's just it—will he, now?''

Ambrose gave us no time for suspense. MacNeath's ball had hardly stopped rolling before his decision was made—and a sound one at that! He whipped his mid-iron from the bag.

'' 'Fraid I'll have to fool you, old chap,'' said he airily. ''You wanted me to go for the green —eh, what? Well, I hate to disappoint you; but I can't gamble in an even game—not when the kitty is a sand trap. . . . Ride, you little round rascal; ride!''

The last remark was addressed to the ball just before the blade of the mid-iron flicked it from the grass. Again there were two white specks in the distance, lying side by side. If MacNeath was disappointed he did not show it, but tramped on down the course, silent as usual and absorbed in the game. Both took fives on the hole, missing long putts; and the battle was still all square.

Our home hole is a par 4—a blind drive and an iron pitch to the green; and the vital shot is the one from the tee. It must go absolutely straight and high enough to carry the top of the hill, one hundred and forty yards away. To the right is an abrupt downward slope, ending in a deep ravine. To the left, and out of sight from the tee, is a wide sand trap, with the father of all bunkers at its far edge. The only safe ball is the one that sails over the direction post.

Ambrose drove; and a smothered gasp went

up from the gallery. The ball had the speed of a bullet, as well as a perfect line; and, at first, I thought it would rise enough to skim the crest of the hill. Instead of that, it seemed to duck in flight, caught the hard face of the incline, and kicked abruptly to the left. It was that crooked bound which broke all our hearts; for we knew that, barring a miracle, our man was in the sand trap.

"Hard luck!" said MacNeath; and I think he really meant to be sympathetic.

Ambrose looked at him as a bulldog might look at a mastiff.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that!" he answered, rather stiffly. "I like to play my second shot from over there."

"You're welcome!" said MacNeath; and completed our discomfiture by poling out a tremendous shot, which carried well over the direction post and went sailing on up the plateau toward the clubhouse.

No man ever hit a longer ball at a more opportune time. As we toiled up the hill I tried to say something hopeful.

"He may have stopped short of the trap."

"Not a hope!" said MacQuarrie, chewing at his cigar. "He'll be in—up to his neck."

Sure enough, when we reached the summit there was the caddie, a mournful statue on the edge of the sand trap. The crowd halted at a proper distance and Ambrose and MacNeath went forward alone. MacQuarrie and I swung

off to the left, for we wanted to see how deep the ball was in and what sort of a lie it had found.

"Six feet in from the edge," muttered Dunn'l, "an' twenty feet away from the wall. Lyin' up on top of the sand too. An iron wi' a little loft to it, a clean shot, a good thir-rd, an' he might get a four yet. It's just possible."

"But not probable," said I. "What on earth is he waiting for?"

Ambrose had taken a seat on the edge of the trap; and as he looked from the ball to the bunker looming in front of it, he rolled a cigarette.

"You don't mind if I study this situation a bit?" said he to MacNeath.

"Take your time," said the veteran.

"Because I wouldn't want to use the wrong club here," continued Ambrose.

The caddie said something to him at this point; but Phipps shook his red head impatiently and continued to puff at his cigarette. He caught a glimpse of me and beckoned.

"How do the home boys stand on this cup thing?" he asked.

"All even—two matches to two."

"That," said Ambrose after a thoughtful pause, "seems to put it up to me."

At last he rose, tossed away the cigarette end and, reaching for his bag, drew out a wooden club. Again the caddie said something; but Ambrose waved him away. There was not a

sound from his audience, but a hundred heads wagged dolefully in unison. A wooden club—out of a trap? Suicide! Sheer suicide! An iron might give him a fighting chance to halve the hole; but my last lingering hope died when I saw that club in the boy's hand. The infernal young lunatic! I believe I said something of the sort to MacQuarrie.

"Sh-h!" he whispered. "Yon's a baffy. I made it for him."

"What's a baffy?"

"Well, it's just a kind of an exaggerated bulldog spoon—ye might almost call it a wooden mashie, wi' a curvin' sole on it. It's great for distance. The lie is good, the wind's behind him, an' if he can only hit it clean—clean!—— Oh, ye little red devil, keep your head down—keep your head down an' hit it clean!"

I shall never forget the picture spread out along the edge of that green plateau—the red-headed stocky youngster in the sand trap taking his stance and whipping the clubhead back and forth; MacNeath coolly leaning on his driver and smiling over a match already won; the two caddies in the background, one sneeringly triumphant, the other furiously angry; the rim of spectators, motionless, hopeless.

Everybody was watching Ambrose, and I think Old MacQuarrie was the only onlooker who was not absolutely certain that the choice of a wrong club was throwing away our last slender chance.

When the tension was almost unbearable the redhead turned and grinned at MacNeath.

"I suppose you'd shoot this with an iron," said he; "but the baffy is a great club—if you've got the nerve to use it."

Ambrose settled his feet firmly in the sand, craned his neck for a final look at the flag, two hundred yards away, dropped his chin on his chest, waggled the clubhead over the ball, and then swung with every ounce of strength in his sturdy body. I heard a sharp click, saw a tiny feather of sand spurt into the air, and against the blue sky I caught a glimpse of a soaring white speck, which went higher and higher until I lost it altogether. The next thing I knew, the spectators were cheering, yelling, screaming; and some one was hammering me violently between the shoulder blades. It was the unemotional Dunn'l MacQuarrie, gone completely daft with excitement.

"Oh, man!" he cried. "He picked it up as clean as a whistle, an' he's on the green—on the green!"

"Told you that was a sweet little club!" said Ambrose as he climbed out of the trap. "Takes nerve to use one though. On the green, eh? Well, I guess that'll hold you for a while."

His prediction soon had a solid backing of fact. MacNeath, the iron man, the dependable Number One, the match player without nerves, was not proof against a miracle. Ambrose's

phenomenal recovery had shaken the veteran to the soles of his shoes.

MacNeath's second shot was an easy pitch to the green, but he lingered too long over it; the blade of his mashie caught the turf at least three inches behind the ball and shot it off at an angle into the thick, long grass that guards the eighteenth green. He was forced to use a heavy niblick on his third; but the ball rolled thirty feet beyond the pin. He tried hard for the long putt, but missed, and picked up when Ambrose laid his third shot on the lip of the cup.

By the most fortunate fluke ever seen on a golf course our little red Ishmael had won for us the permanent possession of the Edward B. Wimpus Trophy.

MacNeath was game. He picked up his ball with the left hand and offered his right to Ambrose. "Well done!" said he.

"Thanks!" responded Ambrose. "Guess I kind of jarred you with that baffy shot. It's certainly a dandy club in a pinch. Better let MacQuarrie make you one."

MacNeath swallowed hard and nearly managed a smile.

"It wasn't the club," said he. "It was just burglar's luck. You couldn't do it again in a thousand years!"

"Maybe not," replied the victor; "but when you get back to Bellevue you tell all the dear chappies there that I got away with it once—

got away with it the one time when it counted!"

At this point the gallery closed in and overwhelmed young Mr. Phipps. Inside of a minute he heard more pleasant things about himself than had come to his ears in a lifetime. He did not dispute a single statement that was made; nor did he discount one by so much as the deprecating lift of an eyebrow. For once in his life he agreed with everybody. In the stag celebration that followed—with the Edward B. Wimpus Cup in the middle of the big round table—he was easily induced to favour us with a few brief remarks. He informed us that tin cups were nothing in his young life, club spirit was nothing, but that gameness was everything —and the cheering was led by the Dingbats!

Now you know why we feel that we owe Ambrose something; and, if I am any judge, that debt will be paid with heavy interest. Dunn'l MacQuarrie is also a winner. He has booked so many orders for baffies that he is now endeavouring to secure the services of a first-class club maker.

As Ambrose often tells us, the baffy is a sweet little club to have in the bag—provided, of course, you have the nerve to use it.

THE MAJOR, D. O. S.

I

I DESPISE the sort of man who gloats and pokes his finger at you and reminds you that he told you so. I hope I am not in that class, and I would be the last to rub salt into an open wound; still I see no harm in calling attention to the fact that I once expressed an opinion which had to do with Englishmen in general and Major Cuthbert Eustace Lawes—D. S. O., and a lot of other initials—in particular. What is more, that opinion was expressed in the presence of Waddles Wilmot and one other director of the Yavapai Golf and Country Club.

"You can't tell much about an Englishman by looking at him."

Those were my very words, and I stand by them. I point to them with pride. If Waddles had listened to me—but Waddles never listens to anybody. Sometimes he looks as if he might be listening, when as a matter of fact he is only resting his voice and thinking up something cutting and clever to say next.

Speaking of Waddles, the fault is not all his. We have indulged him with too much authority. We have allowed him to become a sort of autocrat, a golfing Pooh-Bah, a self-appointed committee of one with arbitrary powers. He began looking after the club when it was in its infancy, and now that the organisation has grown to quite respectable proportions he does not seem to know how to let go gracefully. He still looks after us, whether we want him to or not, and if it is only the getting out of a new score card Waddles must attend to it, having the first word, the last word and all the words between.

If any one presumes to disagree with him Waddles merely snorts in that disdainful way of his and goes on talking louder and louder until finally the opposition succumbs, blown down by sheer lung power, as it were, gassed before reaching the trenches. Wind is all right in its place, and in moderation, but a steady gale gets on the nerves in time. Waddles is a human simoom, carrying dust, sand and cactus.

I say this in all kindness, for I am really fond of the old boy. He has many admirable qualities, and frequently tells us what they are, but consideration for others is not one of them; and when he plays golf the things he does to an opponent are sinful. He is just as ruthless and overbearing on the links as he is in committee meeting—but of this, more anon—much more. I made my remark about Englishmen a month or so after the Major became a member

of the club. We understood that Lawes was a retired infantry officer in poor health, and when he arrived in our part of the world he brought with him a Hindu servant with his head wrapped up in about forty yards of cheesecloth, an unquenchable thirst, some gilt-edged letters of introduction from big people, and a hobnail liver. He was proposed by two of our financial moguls and passed the membership committee without a whisper of dissent.

"This old bird," said Waddles, "is probably a cracking good golfer. Nearly all Englishmen are. We can use him to plug up that weak spot on the team." And of course he looked straight at me when he said it. Goodness knows, I never asked to be put on the club team, and I play my worst golf in competition.

Some of the other men thought that the Major would lend a bit of tone to the organisation. I presume they got the idea from the string of initials after his name.

As to his golfing, the Major proved a disappointment. He did not seem in any haste to avail himself of the privileges of active membership, and when at the club he spent all his time sitting on the porch and staring at the mountains in the distance. I don't remember ever seeing him without a tall brandy highball at his elbow.

Personally, the Major wasn't much to look at. You could just as easily have guessed the age of a mummy. He was long-legged and cadaverous,

with thin, sandy hair and a yellowish moustache that never seemed to be trimmed. His mouth was always slightly ajar, his front teeth were unduly prominent, and his chin was short and receded at an acute angle. A side view of the Major suggested a tired, half-starved old rabbit that had lost all interest in life. His eyes were a faded light blue in colour and blinked constantly without a vestige of human expression. He was freckled like a turkey egg—freckled all over, but mostly on the neck and the forearms. When he spoke, which was seldom, it was in a thin, hesitating treble, reminiscent of a strayed sheep, and he had an exasperating habit of leaving a sentence half finished and beginning on another one. He could sit for hours, staring straight in front of him and apparently seeing nothing at all. When addressed he usually jumped half out of his chair and said something like this:

"Eh? Oh! God-bless-me! God-bless-me! What say?"

Socially he was a very mangy-looking lion, but we understood that he was very well connected in the old country and not so stupid as he seemed. He couldn't have been, and lived. He was a bachelor of independent means; he bought a bungalow on Medway Hill and a six-cylinder runabout, which the servant learned to drive, after a fearsome fashion. This put the Major out of the winter-visitor class—which was reassuring—but as the weeks passed and

he was never seen with a golf club in his hands Waddles began to worry about that weak spot on the team.

Three of us were watching Lawes one afternoon through a window of the lounging room, which commands a view of the porch. The Major was spread out in a big wicker chair, and, save for certain mechanical movements of the right hand and arm, was as motionless as a turtle on a log. As usual, Waddles was doing most of the talking.

"Ain't he the study in still life, eh? . . . With the accent on the still—get me? Still! Ho, ho! Not bad a bit. . . . Gaze upon him, gentlemen; the world's most consistent rum hound! He hasn't moved a muscle in the last hour except to lift that glass. Wonderful type of the athletic Englishman, what-oh? Devoted to sports and pastimes, my word, yes! He wouldn't qualify for putting the shot, but for putting the highball I'll back him against all comers."

"Oh, I don't know," said Jay Gilman, who is a conservative sort of chap and knows Waddles well enough not to believe everything he says. "I don't know. The old boy makes a drink last a long time. He doesn't order many in the course of an afternoon. I've never seen him the least bit edged."

"Fellow like that never gets edged," argued Waddles. "The skin stays just so full all the time. Can't get any fuller. Did you ever try

to talk with his royal jaglets? Sociable as an oyster! I tried to get him opened up the other day. He's been in India and Africa and everywhere else, they tell me, and I thought he might want to gas about his experiences. War stuff. Nothing stirring. A frost. Kidded him about the Boers, and the way the embattled farmers hung it on perfidious Albion. Couldn't even get a rise out of him. All he did was stare at me with those fishy eyes of his and make motions with his Adam's apple! Ever notice the way he watches you when you're talking to him? It's enough to make a man nervous! A major, eh? If he was a major, I wonder what the shave-tail lieutenants were like! D. S. O.! They got the initials balled up when they hitched that title to him. It should have been D. O. S.!"

"All right," said Gilman; "I'll bite. I'll be the Patsy. Why D. O. S.?"

"Dismal Old Souse, of course!" cackled Waddles. "Fits him like a glove, eh?"

It was then that I expressed my opinion, as previously quoted: "You can't tell much about an Englishman by looking at him."

But Waddles only laughed. He usually laughs at his own witticisms.

"D. O. S.," said he. "Impromptu, but good. I'll have to tell it to the boys!"

II

But for Cyril, I suppose the Major would have remained a chair warmer indefinitely.

Cyril was the Major's nephew, doing a bit of globe trotting after getting out of college, and he dropped in out of a clear sky, taking the Major entirely by surprise. We heard later that all the Major said was, "Bless me, it's Cyril, isn't it?"

Looking at the boy, you knew at once what the Major had been like at twenty-five or thereabouts; so it goes without saying that Cyril was no motion-picture type for beauty. He was tall and thin and gangling, his feet were always in his way, his clothes did not fit him and would not have fitted anything human, his cloth hats were really not hats at all but speckled poultices, and he was as British as the unicorn itself. He was almost painfully shy when among strangers, and blushed if any one spoke to him; but his coming seemed to cheer the Major tremendously. It hadn't occurred to me before, but I presume the D. O. S. had been lonely for his kind. Cyril was his kind—no question about that—and the pair of them held a love feast which lasted all of one afternoon. Waddles witnessed this touching family reunion and told us about it afterward, but it is likely he handled the truth in his usual nonchalant manner. Waddles would never spoil a good story for the sake of mere accuracy.

"It was great stuff!" said he. "They sat out there on the porch and gabbled terribly. A dumb man couldn't have got a word in edgewise. The Major was never at a loss for a topic of conversation. As fast as one was exhausted he would look in his glass and say, 'Shan't we have another, dear boy?' Friend Nephew never missed his cue once. 'Rawther!' he'd say, or 'Right-oh!' Then the Major would hoist signals of distress and make signs at the waiter. Oh, it was lovely to see them taking so much comfort in each other's society—and so much nourishment."

"What I want to know is this," put in Jay Gilman: "Did it liven 'em up any?"

"Not so you could notice it with the naked eye. For all the effect that anybody could see, the stuff might just as well have been poured into a pair of gopher holes. They went away at six o'clock, solemn and dignified, loaded to capacity but not even listing the least bit from the cargo they'd taken on. A lot of raw material wasted. That sort of thing is inhuman—uncanny. It must be a gift that runs in families—what?"

Before long we had a real sensation—the Major blossomed out into a playing member. A mummy doing a song and dance wouldn't have created any more excitement round the clubhouse. Even the caddies were talking about it.

Sam broke the news to me while I was practis-

ing midiron shots on the other side of the eighteenth green. Sam has carried my bag for years. He is too old to be a caddie, too young to be a member of the Supreme Court, and too wise for either job. He shoots the course in the seventies every time he can dodge the greens keeper—play by employés being strictly prohibited. He has forgotten more golf than I shall ever know, and tries hard to conceal the superiority he feels, but never quite makes the grade. You know the sort of caddie I mean—every club has a few like Sam.

"There you go again! What did I tell you about playin' the ball too far off your right foot? Stiffen up those wrists a bit—don't let 'em flop so. Put some forearm into the shot, and never mind lookin' up to see where the ball goes. . . . Say, that long, thin gentleman, him with the nose and teeth—the one they call the Major, that sits on the porch so much liftin' tall ones—I caddied for him this morning."

"You don't tell me so!"

"Yeh, I do. Sure! Him and his relative—the young fellah. Serial, ain't it? Well, they was both out early this morning, the Major beefin' a little about losin' his sleep, and sayin' he wouldn't make a fool of himself for anybody else on earth; but after he connected with a few shots he began to enjoy it and talk about what a lovely day it was goin' to be. You know how it is: any weather looks good to you when your shots are comin' off."

"Can he play at all?"

"Who, the Major? A shark, I tell you! That old boy has been a great golfer in his day, and it wasn't so long ago neither. To look at him you wouldn't think he had a full cleek shot in his system, but that's where he'd fool you. What's more, he knows where it's goin' when he ties into it. The young fellah plays a mighty sweet game—mighty sweet. He hits everything clean and hard and right on the line, but give the Major a few days' practise and he'll carry my small change every time. Knows more golf than Serial—got more shots, and he's a whale with his irons. He's a little wild with his wood off the tee—hooks too much and gets into trouble—but when he straightens out that drive he'll have Serial playin' the odd behind him. Say, it'd be great to get 'em both into the Invitation Tournament, eh?"

Now our Invitation Tournament is the big show of the year in golfing circles. Waddles sees to that. All members of the association are eligible, but visitors have to have a card and an invitation as well.

Waddles always scans these visitors very closely, and if a man is known as a cup hunter no amount of pressure can get him in. The Major, being a member of the club, was automatically invited to participate, but Cyril must be classed as a visitor.

I went to Waddles and told him what Sam had told me, suggesting that here was the chance

to coax the Major off the porch for good, and perhaps get him onto the team later. I said that I thought it would be a graceful thing to issue an invitation to Cyril without waiting for a request from the Major.

"You poor fish!" said Waddles. "I was going to do that anyway. Do you think I'm asleep all the time?"

That is the way with Waddles. He can catch an idea on the fly, and before it settles he has adopted it as his own. He doesn't care a brass-mounted continental who scared it up in the first place. Before it lights it is his—all his. He said he didn't believe the Major was half so good as his advance notices, and, as for the full cleek shot, he pooh-poohed that part of the story entirely. Waddles has never mastered the cleek, but he is a demon with a bulldog spoon or with a brassy.

"I'll do this thing—as a common courtesy to a member," said Waddles; "but I'm not counting on the Major's golf. A man can't lay off for months and come back playing any sort of a game."

So the invitation was issued in Cyril's name, and we went in search of the Major. He was on the porch and Cyril was practising putts on the clock green.

Waddles can be very formal and dignified and diplomatic when he wants to be, and as a salve spreader he has few equals and no superiors. He pays a compliment in such a bluff, hearty

fashion that it carries with it an air of absolute sincerity.

"Major," he began, "I can't tell you how delighted I am to hear that you have taken up the game again. Aside from the pleasure, it is bound to benefit your health."

"Eh?" said the Major, staring at Waddles intently. "Oh, yes! I'm feeling quite well at present, thanks."

"And you'll feel better for taking exercise," continued Waddles. "We are hoping that you will enter our Invitation Tournament next week. You'll get a number of good matches, meet some charming people and make some friends. Play begins on Wednesday."

"Ah!" said the Major.

"You can pick your own partner in the qualifying round." And here Waddles brought out the envelope containing the invitation. "I thought likely you might want to play with your nephew."

The Major took the envelope and opened it. After he had read the inclosure he looked up at Waddles and smiled.

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," said he. "Most kind. Cyril will appreciate this. . . . Shan't we have a drink?"

"Can you beat him?" said Waddles to me when we were back in the lounging room. "Just about as chummy as an oyster!"

"Either that or very inattentive," said I;

"but just the same I think he'll play. Cyril will persuade him."

"I don't care a whoop whether he plays or not," growled Waddles. "I hate a man who can't loosen up and *talk*!"

"There is only one thing worse," said I, "and that is a man who talks too much."

Waddles took my remark as personal and wolfed at me for half an hour. Why is it that the man who has no consideration for your feelings is always so confoundedly sensitive about his own?

III

Flashing now to a close-up of the scores for the qualifying round, there were two strange faces in the first sixteen—Cyril's and the Major's—and Cyril walked off with the cup offered for low man. His seventy-three created quite a commotion among the Class A men, but the Major's eighty-one was what knocked them all a twister. Even Waddles was amazed. Waddles had turned in an eighty-five, which barely got him into the championship flight, but medal scores are nothing in Waddles' life. Match play is where he shines—match play against a nervous opponent

"The old rum-hound must have been shooting over his head," said Waddles. "I'll bet he holed a lot of niblick shots."

I might have been in the fourth flight if I had not picked up my ball after playing eleven

in the ditch at the fifth hole, and by that act eliminated myself from the tournament. I finished the round, of course, and signed my partner's card, becoming thereafter a mere spectator and a bit of the gallery.

Sam was disgusted with me—so much so that he refused me advice or sympathy. As a usual thing Sam walks up on a drive and selects the club which he thinks I should use. I may disagree with him, but I notice that in the end I always make the shot with the club of his selection. If I am short he tells me that I spared the shot; if I am over he says I hit it too hard.

After the catastrophe at the fifth hole Sam stood the bag on end and turned his back, a statue of silent contempt. When he allows me to pick out a club I know that he has washed his hands of me; when he will not accept a cigarette I am past praying for. I can think of nothing more keenly humiliating than to feel myself a disappointment to a caddie like Sam, but I have disappointed him so often that he should be getting hardened to it by now.

The first and second rounds of match play took place on Thursday, and the pairings put Cyril at the top of the drawing and the Major at the bottom. When the day was over the first flight had assumed a distinctly international aspect, for the semifinalists appeared as follows:

Waddles versus Cyril; Jay Gilman versus the Major.

Cyril had won his matches quite handily and without being pressed, but the Major had caught a brace of seasoned campaigners, one of whom took him to the twentieth hole before he passed out on the end of a long rainbow putt.

Gilman had played his usual steady game—nothing brilliant about it, but extremely dependable; and, as for Waddles, he had staggered along on the ragged edge of defeat both morning and afternoon, annoying his opponents as much as possible and winning quite as much with his head as with his clubs.

The time has come to say a few brief but burning words about the way friend Waddles plays the royal and ancient game of golf when there is anything in sight for the victor. I trust that when he reads this he will have the decency to remember that he had already cut my handicap to the quick, as it were.

To begin with, Waddles has no more form than an apple woman or a Cubist nude. He is so constructed that he cannot take a full swing to save his immortal soul. Everything has to be wrist and forearm with Waddles, but somehow or other he manages to snap his foolish little tee shots straight down the middle of the course, popping them high over the bunkers and avoiding all the traps and pits. The special providence that cares for taxicab drivers, sailors and drunken men seems to take charge of

Waddles' ball in flight, imparting to it a tremendous overspin that gives it distance. I never saw Waddles square away at a drive without pitying him for his short, choppy swing; but he usually beats me about ten yards on account of the run that he gets. I never watched him jab at a putt without feeling certain that the ball was hit too hard to stay in the hole; but stay it does. Waddles actually putts with an overspin, and his ball burrows like a mole, dropping into the cup as if made of lead.

His brassy shots are just pusillanimous—there is no other word which describes them accurately—but somehow they keep on bouncing toward the pin. His irons run half-way and creep the rest of the distance. He always gets better results than his shots deserve, and complains that he should have had more. This one little trick of his is enough to drive an opponent crazy. Every golfer knows the moral—no, immoral—effect of going up against some one who gets more out of every shot than he puts into it, and still is not satisfied. It is like sitting in a poker game with a man who draws four to a deuce, makes an ace full, wins the pot, and then wolfs because it wasn't four aces.

I never played with Waddles without feeling certain that I could show him up on the long game, and it was straining to do it that ruined me. Trying to pick the tail feathers out of that lame duck has ruined many a golfer, the secret being that the duck isn't as lame as he looks.

Waddles makes 'em all press—a big factor in his match play; but there are others, and not nearly so legitimate.

Playing the game strictly on merit, observing all the little niceties of demeanour and the courtesies due an opponent, Waddles would be a desperately hard man to beat; but he does not stop at merit. When he is out to win he does not stop anywhere. He has made a lifelong study of the various ways in which an opponent may be annoyed and put off his game, and he is the acknowledged master of all of them.

For instance, if he plays Doc Jones, who is chatty and conversational and likes to talk between shots, Waddles never opens his mouth once, but plods along with a scowl on his face and his lower lip sticking out a foot. Before long the poor little Doc begins to wonder whether he has said anything to hurt Waddles' feelings—and that is the end of Jones. But if Waddles plays Chester Hodge, who believes that the secret of a winning game is concentration, he is a perfect windmill, talking to Chester every minute, telling him funny stories, asking him questions, and literally conversing him off his feet.

Bill Mulqueen is nervous and impatient and hates to wait on his second shots; so when Waddles plays him he drives short and takes five minutes to play the odd, while Bill fumes and frets and accumulates steam for the final explosion, which never fails to strew the last

nine with his mangled remains. On the other hand, old Barrison is deliberation itself, and Waddles beats him by playing his own shots quickly and then crowding Barry—hurrying him up, nagging at him, riding him from shot to shot, trying to speed up an engine that can't be speeded without racking itself to pieces. Joe Bowhan hates to have any one moving about the tee when he is setting himself to drive. Waddles licks him by washing his ball fresh on every hole. Joe can't see him, but he can hear him scouring away behind him. "Hand-laundered out of the contest again" is what Joe tells us when he comes into the clubhouse.

Perhaps the cruelest thing Waddles ever did was in the finals of the Spring Handicap against young Archie Gatter. The kid was inclined to think fairly well of himself and his game, but on the day of the match Waddles lugged a visiting golf architect round the course with him, planning improvements in the way of traps and bunkers, discussing various kinds of grass for the greens, arguing about soil, and paying no attention whatever to the wretched Archie—not even watching him make his shots. It broke the boy's heart to be ignored so completely, and he shot the last nine holes in a fat fifty-seven, finishing a total wreck.

These are only a few of Waddles' little villainies, and the fact that he is a consistent winner at match play bears out the theory that the

best study of golf is golfers—splitting it fifty-fifty with the late Mr. Pope.

The most exasperating thing about Waddles is the bland, unconscious manner in which he perpetrates these outrages upon his opponents. He never seems aware that he is doing anything wrong or taking an unfair advantage; he pleads thoughtlessness if driven into a corner—and gets away with it too. You have to know Waddles very well before you are certain that every little movement has a meaning all its own and is part of a cold-blooded and deliberate plan of campaign.

With all these things in mind, I had a hunch that Friday's match with Cyril would be worth watching, and I was at the clubhouse at nine in the morning. Cyril and the Major were already there, driving practise balls. It was generally understood that the matches in the semi-finals would start at nine-thirty, and promptly on the dot Jay Gilman and the Major were on their way—both of them off to perfect drives.

I waited to follow Cyril and Waddles—and a long, weary wait it was. There is nothing which secures the angora so neatly and completely as to be all dressed up and keyed up with nowhere to go. Have you ever seen a boxer fretting and chafing in his corner, waiting for the champion to put in an appearance; and did you ever stop to think that the champion, in his dressing room, was counting on the effect of that nervous period of inactivity? Golf is a game which de-

mands mental poise, and Cyril was losing his, minute by minute. He prowled all over the place, searching for Waddles; he walked out and looked down the road toward town; he practiced putting—and hit every shot too hard. If he had not been an Englishman, and schooled to keep his feelings to himself, I think he would have said something of a blistering nature.

It was eleven-fifteen when Waddles arrived, dripping apologies from every pore. Had Cyril understood that nine-thirty was the hour? Well, wasn't that a shame—too bad he hadn't telephoned or something! Waddles stated—and there was and is no reason to doubt his word—that he thought the matches were scheduled for the afternoon. He dawdled in the locker room for a scandalously long time, while Cyril made little journeys to the first tee and back again, growing warmer and warmer with each trip.

When Waddles finally emerged, neatly swathed in flannels, he suggested lunch. Cyril replied a bit stiffly that he never took food in the middle of the day.

"And a hard match in front of you, too," said Waddles. "I couldn't think of starting without a sandwich. Do you mind waiting while I have one?"

Cyril lied politely, but it was a terrible strain on him, and Waddles consumed a sandwich, a glass of milk and forty-five minutes more. Then he had to have one of his irons wrapped where the shaft had split—another straw for the

camel's back. By this time the Major and Jay had finished their match, the Major winning on the sixteenth green. They joined the gallery, after the usual ceremonies at the nineteenth hole.

"Are you ready?" asked Waddles, breezing out on the first tee—and that was rather nervy, too, seeing that Cyril hadn't been anything else for three mortal hours.

"After you, sir," said the boy, short and sharp. He knew that he was getting "the work," and he resented it.

It always suits Waddles to have the honour. He likes to shoot first because his tee shot usually makes an opponent sore. He popped one of his dinky little drives into the air, but instead of dropping into the bunker it floated beyond it to the middle of the course and ran like a scared rabbit.

"No distance!" grumbled Waddles, slapping his club on the tee. "No distance. I'm all out of luck to-day."

Well, that was no more than rubbing it in by word of mouth. It produced the desired effect, because Cyril nearly broke himself in two in an attempt to beat that choppy half-arm swing. He swung much too hard, didn't follow through at all, and the ball sliced into a trap far up to the right.

"Do you know what you did then?" asked Waddles. "You tried to kill it, you didn't follow through, and——"

"And I sliced. I know perfectly, thanks." And Cyril started down the course, with Waddles tagging at his hip and telling him what was the matter with his swing. Coming from a man who never took a full-arm wallop at a ball in his life, criticism must have seemed superfluous. I couldn't see Cyril's face, but his ears reddened.

Waddles slapped a brassy to the edge of the putting green, but Cyril, trying for distance out of a heel print, took too much sand and barely got back on the course again. His third reached the green, whereupon Waddles promptly laid his ball dead for a four. Cyril missed a twenty-footer and lost the first hole.

Again Waddles spatted out a drive that narrowly escaped a cross bunker, but it struck on a hard spot and ran fully one hundred yards before it stopped. Waddles knows every hard spot on the course and governs himself accordingly.

Cyril followed through this time—followed through so vigorously that the ball developed a hook. A cross wind helped it along into the rough grass, leaving him a nasty second shot over shrubbery and trees. It hadn't stopped rolling before Waddles was talking again.

"You know what you did then? Too much right hand; and your club head——"

"Precisely," said Cyril, and left the tee almost on a dog-trot; but Waddles trotted with him, explaining what had happened to the club

head. He was so earnest about it, so eager to be of assistance, so persistent, that Cyril did not know how to take him. Then, to add to the boy's discomfiture, Waddles played a perfect spoon shot, taking advantage of the wind, and the ball stopped six feet from the pin. Only a miracle could have saved Cyril after that, and there were no miracles left in his system. His ball carried low from the rough, struck the limb of a tree and glanced out of bounds. He played another, which dropped into thick weeds, and then picked up, conceding the hole. All the way to the third tee Waddles expounded the theory of the niblick shot out of grass, pausing only to spat another perfect ball down the course.

It was here that Cyril left the wood in his bag and took out a cleek. He wanted distance and he needed direction, our third hole calling for a well-placed tee shot; but he sliced just enough to put him squarely behind the largest tree on the entire course.

"I was sure you'd do that," said Waddles, sympathetically. "It's really a wooden club shot, and when you took your iron I knew you were afraid of it. Changing clubs is always a sign of weakness, don't you think so?"

Cyril mumbled something and started down the path, and at this point the old Major, who had been lingering in the background, swung in behind him with his first and last bit of advice.

"Keep your hair on, dear boy," he bleated.

"Keep your hair on. Whatever happens, don't get waxy."

Cyril grunted but didn't say anything, and the Major dropped to the rear again, making queer little noises in his throat.

"Now the ideal—shot on this—hole," panted Waddles, overtaking his victim, "is a little bit—farther to the left. A hook—doesn't hurt you—as much—as a slice——"

"I'm not hurt yet!" snapped Cyril.

"Why, of course not!" cried Waddles with the heartiest good nature. "Of course not—but if your ball—had been farther to the left—you wouldn't have to play—over that tree—and ——" There was more, but Cyril did not wait to hear it.

Waddles, executing his second with mechanical precision, carried the deep ravine with his mashie and put the ball on the green for a sure four. Off to the right Cyril prepared to do likewise, but the tree loomed ahead of him, his nerves were unstrung, his temper was ruffled, and instead of going cleanly under the ball he caught the turf four inches behind it and pitched into the ravine, where he found a lie that was all but unplayable.

"Tough luck!" said Waddles.

Cyril turned and looked at him. I expected an outburst of some sort, but the boy was evidently trying to keep his hair on.

"I didn't hit it," said he at length, swallowing hard. I heard an odd choking noise behind

me. It was the Major, attempting to remain calm.

"Of course you didn't hit it!" agreed Waddles. "You took a hatful of turf; and you know why, don't you?"

Cyril groaned and plunged into the ravine.

Why follow the harrying details too closely? With the Major as chief mourner, and Waddles holding sympathetic postmortems on all his bad shots, Cyril suffered a complete collapse. I could have beaten him—any one could have beaten him—and as a matter of fact he beat himself. Having found his weak spot, Waddles never let up for an instant. Talk, talk, talk; his flow of conversation was as irritating as a neighbour's phonograph, and as incessant. I wondered that Cyril contained himself as well as he did, until I remembered that it is tradition with the English to lose as silently as they win.

The Major, who saw it all, addressed but one remark to me. It was on the tenth hole, and Waddles was showing Cyril why he had topped an iron shot.

"Look here," said the Major, jerking his thumb at Waddles, "does he always do this sort of thing? Talk so much, I mean?"

I replied, and quite truthfully, that it depended on the way he felt. The Major grunted, and that ended the conversation.

The match was wound up on the thirteenth; Cyril shook hands, complimented Waddles on his game, and made a bee line for the clubhouse.

Nobody could blame him for not wanting to finish the round. Waddles tagged along at his elbow, gesticulating, explaining the theory of golf, even offering to illustrate certain shots with which Cyril had had trouble.

The Major spent the rest of the afternoon on the porch, nursing a tall glass and looking at the hills. After a shower Cyril joined him.

"The blooming Britons are holding a lodge of sorrow," said Waddles, who was in high spirits. "What's the betting on the finals tomorrow?"

"I'll back the Major," spoke up Jay Gilman, "if you'll promise not to talk the shirt off his back."

"Another dumb player, eh?" asked Waddles, grinning.

"Never opened his mouth to me but once the entire way round," answered Jay.

"And what did he say then?"

"As near as I recall," replied Jay, "he said 'Dormie!' "

"I hate a man who can't talk!" exclaimed Waddles.

"How you must hate yourself," I suggested, and was forced to dodge a match safe.

"Just the same," persisted Jay, "I'll take the Major's end if you'll promise to keep your mouth shut."

"I'll accept no bets on that basis," Waddles announced. "I like a friendly, chatty game."

"I've got you for fifty, then, and talk your

head off!'' And Jay laughed until I thought he would choke. As a matter of fact, he laughed all the rest of the afternoon.

IV

Quite a gallery turned out for the finals, and this time there was no delay. Waddles was on hand early, and so was the Major. There was considerable betting, for Jay Gilman insisted on backing the Major to the limit.

''You're only doing that because he beat you,'' said Waddles in an injured tone of voice.

''Make it a hundred if you want to,'' was Jay's come-back.

''Fifty is plenty, thanks.''

''What? Not weakening already?'' asked Jay. ''A hundred, and no limit on the conversation!''

''Got you!'' snapped Waddles.

He would have taken the honour, too, if the Major had not beaten him to it. The old fellow ambled out on the tee, helped himself to a pinch of sand, patted it down carefully, adjusted his ball, and hit a screamer dead on the pin, with just enough hook to make it run well. Then he stepped back, clapped his hands to his waist and cackled—actually cackled like a hen.

''Do you know,'' said he, addressing Waddles—''I believe I've burst my belt! Yes, I'm quite certain I have; but don't fear, old chap.

I sha'n't be indecent. I have braces on. Ho, ho, ho!"

Waddles paused with his mouth open. At first I thought he was going to say something, but evidently nothing occurred to him, so he teed his ball and took his stance.

"It was an old one," said the Major. "I've worn it for ages. Given me by Freddy Fitzpatrick. Queer chap, Fitz. . . . You don't mind my babbling a little, do you? Dare say I'm a bit nervous."

"Oh, not in the least," grunted Waddles, addressing his ball. He hit his usual drive, with the usual result, but his ball was at least forty yards short of the Major's.

"Very fortunate, sir!" bleated the Major, following Waddles from the tee. "Blest if I see how you do it! Your form—you don't mind criticism, old chap?—your form is wretchedly bad. Atrocious! Your swing is cramped, your stance is awkward, yet somehow you manage to get over the bunkers. Extraordinary, I call it. Some day you shall teach me the stroke if you will, eh?"

Waddles didn't say a word. He tucked his chin down into his collar and made tracks for his ball, but there was a puzzled look in his eyes. He didn't seem to know what to make of this sudden flood of conversation. The Major was with him every step of the way, blatting about his friend Fitzpatrick.

"He had a stroke like yours, old Fitz.

Frightfully crippled up with rheumatism, poor chap! Abominable golfer! No form, no swing, but the devil's own luck. . . . I say, what club shall you use next? I should take a cleek, but you don't carry one, I've noticed. Too bad. Very useful club, but it calls for a full, clean swing. You'd boggle a cleek horribly. . . . You're taking a brassy? Quite right, old chap, quite right. I should, too, if I couldn't depend on my irons."

Waddles waved the Major aside, and pulled off his shot; but it seemed to me that he hurried the least little bit. Perhaps he was expecting another outburst of language. His ball stopped ten yards short of the putting green.

"Ah!" said the Major. "You stabbed at that one, dear boy. Old Fitz stabbed his second shots too. Nervousness, I dare say; but you haven't the look of a man with nerves. Rather beefy for that, I should think. Tight match, and all. Too much food, perhaps. Never can tell, eh? Old Fitz was a gross feeder too. . . . Now I'm going to take an iron, and if you don't mind I wish you'd stand behind me and tell me how to shorten my swing a bit. I'm inclined to play an iron too strong. . . . A little farther over, if you please. I don't want you where I can see you, old chap, but I sha'n't mind your talking."

The Major pulled his midiron out of the bag and Waddles obliged with a steady stream of advice, not one item of which was heeded:

"Advance that left foot a little, and don't drop your shoulder so much! Come back a bit slower, keep your eye on the ball, start your swing higher up——"

At this point the blade of the midiron connected with the ball and sent it sailing straight for the pin—a beautiful shot, and clean as a whistle. A white speck bounded on the green and rolled past the hole.

"You see?" cried the Major. "Too strong—oh, much too strong!"

"You're up there for a putt!" snorted Waddles. "What did you expect—at this distance?"

"With your assistance," continued the Major, ignoring Waddles' sarcasm, "I shall shorten my swing. You've the shortest swing I've ever seen. Shorter than poor old Fitz's. I'm sorry about that belt, but I sha'n't be indecent. I have braces on—suspenders, I believe you call them." He squinted at his ball as he advanced. "Too strong. Never mind. I dare say I shall hole the putt. . . . You're taking a mashie next? Tricky shot—very, especially on a fast green."

Waddles composed himself with a visible effort and really achieved a very fine approach shot. The ball had the perfect line to the hole, but was three feet short of the cup.

"Never up, never in!" cackled the Major, and proceeded to sink a three—a nasty, twisting twelve-footer, and downhill at that. There was a patter of applause from the gallery, started

by Gilman and Cyril. The Major marched to the second tee, babbling continually:

"I owe you an apology. Never had a three there before. Never shall again. Stroke under par, isn't it? Not at all bad for a beginning. Better luck next time. Wish I hadn't broken this belt. Puts me off my shots."

"What do you mean—better luck next time?" demanded Waddles, but got no response. The Major had switched to his friend Fitzpatrick, and was chirping about rheumatism and gout and heaven knows what all. He stopped talking just long enough to peel off another tremendous drive, and if he had taken the ball in his hand and carried it out on the course he couldn't have selected a better spot from which to play his second.

It was on this tee that Waddles tried to hand the Major's stuff back to him, probably figuring that he could stand as much conversation as his opponent, and last longer at the repartee. He began to tell the story of the Scotch golfer and his collie dog, which is one of the best things he does, but I noticed that when it came time for him to drive he grunted as he hit the ball, and when Waddles grunts it is a sign that he is calling up the reserves. He got the same old shot and the same old run, and would have finished the same old story, but the Major horned in with a long-winded reminiscence of his own, and the collie was lost in the shuffle. Another animal was lost too—a goat belonging to Wad-

dles. He spoke sharply to his opponent before playing his second, and then sliced a spoon shot deep into the rough.

"Ah, too bad!" chirruped the Major. "And the grass is quite deep over there, isn't it? Now I shall use the midiron again, and you shall watch and tell me about my swing—that is, if you don't mind, old chap."

Waddles didn't mind. He told the Major enough things to rattle a wooden Indian, and just as the club had started to descend he raised his voice sharply. It would have made me miss the ball entirely, but it seemed to have no effect on the Major, who did not even flinch but lined one out to the green.

Waddles wandered off into the rough, mumbling to his caddie. The third shot was a remarkable one. He tore the ball out of the thick grass, raised it high in the air and put it on the green, six feet from the cup. The Major then laid his third shot stone-dead for a four. Waddles still had a difficult putt to halve the hole, but while he was studying the roll of the green the Major spoke up.

"I shan't ask you to putt that," said he. "I concede you a four."

Waddles stared at him with eyes that fairly bulged.

"You—what?" said he. "You give me this putt?"

The Major nodded and walked off the green. Waddles looked first at his ball, then at the cup,

and then at the crowd of spectators. At last he picked up and followed, and a whisper ran through the gallery. The general impression prevailed that conceding a six-foot putt at the outset of an important match was nothing short of emotional insanity.

Of course since he had been offered a four on the hole Waddles could do nothing but accept it gracefully—and begin wondering why on earth his opponent had been so generous. I dare any golfer to put himself in Waddles' place and arrive at a conclusion soothing to the nerves and the temper. The most natural inference was that the Major held him cheaply, pitied him, did not fear his game.

I thought this was what the old fellow was getting at, but it was not until they reached the third putting green that I began to appreciate the depth of the Major's cunning and the diabolical cleverness of his golfing strategy.

Waddles had a two-foot putt to halve the third hole—a straight, simple tap over a perfectly flat surface—the sort of putt that he can make with his eyes shut, ninety-nine times out of the hundred. The Major had already holed his four, and I knew by the careless manner in which Waddles stepped up to his ball that he expected the Major to concede the putt. It was natural for him to expect it, since he had already been given a difficult six-footer.

Waddles stood there, waggling his putter behind the ball and waiting for the Major to say

the word, but the word did not come. This seemed to irritate Waddles. He looked at the Major, and his expression said, plain as print, "You don't really insist on my making this dinky little putt?" It was all wasted, for the Major was regarding him with a fishy stare—looking clear through him in fact. The expectant light faded out of Waddles' eyes. He shrugged his shoulders and gave his attention to the shot, examining every inch of the line to the cup. It seemed to be a straight putt, but was it? Waddles took his lower lip in his teeth and tapped the ball very gently. It ran off to the left, missing the cup by at least three inches.

"Aha!" chuckled the Major. "You thought I would give you that one too, eh? Old Fitz used to say, 'Give a man a hard putt and he'll miss an easy one. After that he'll never be sure of anything.' Extraordinary how often it happens just that way. Seems to have an unsettling effect on the nerves. Tricky beggar, Fitz. Won the Duffers' Cup at Bombay by conceding a twenty-foot putt on the sixteenth green. Opponent went all to little pieces. Finished one down, with a fifteen on the last hole. Queer game, golf!"

"Yes," said Waddles, breathing hard, "and a lot of queer people play it. Your honour, sir."

The Major smacked out another long one, but Waddles, boiling inside and scarcely able to see the ball, topped his tee shot and bounded into the bunker.

"You see what it does," said the Major. "You were still thinking about that putt. The effect on the nerves——"

"Oh, cut it out!" growled Waddles. "Play the game right if you're going to play it at all! Your mouth is the best club in your bag!"

The Major did not resent this in the least; paid no attention in fact. He toddled away, blatting intermittently about his friend Fitz, and Waddles knocked half the sand out of the bunker before he finally emerged, spitting gravel and adjectives. Sore was no name for it! He lost the hole, of course, making him three down.

The rest of the contest was interesting, but only from a psychological point of view. Evidently considering that he had a safe lead the Major cut out the conversation and the horseplay and settled down to par golf. There was no lack of talk, however, for Waddles erupted constantly. Braced by the thought that he was annoying his opponent by these verbal outbursts, he managed to halve four holes in a row, but on the ninth green he missed another short putt. In the explosion that followed he blew off his safety valve completely, and the rest of the match degenerated into a riotous procession, so far as noise was concerned.

The thing I could not understand was that the Major held on the even tenour of his way, unruffled and serene as a June morning. The louder Waddles talked the better the old fellow

seemed to like it. Never once did he seem disturbed; never once did he hesitate on a shot. With calm, mechanical precision he proceeded to go through Waddles like a cold breeze, and the latter was so busy thinking up things to say that he flubbed disgracefully, and was beaten on the thirteenth green, seven and five.

Well, Waddles may have his faults, but losing ungracefully is not one of them. He will fight you to the very last ditch, but once the battle is over he declares peace immediately. He walked up to the Major and held out his hand. He grinned, too, though I imagine it hurt his face to do it.

"You're all right, Major!" said he. "You're immense! You licked me and you made me like it. If I had your nerves—if I could concentrate on my shots and not let anything bother me——"

Some one behind me laughed. It was Jay Gilman.

"It has been a pleasure, dear chap," said the Major. "A pleasure, I assure you!"

Several of us had dinner at the club that night, Jay offering to give the party because of the money he had won from Waddles. When the coffee came on, America's representative in the finals attempted to explain his defeat.

"The Major began the gab-fest," said Waddles. "He started off chattering like a magpie and trying to rattle me, and naturally I went

back at him with the same stuff. Fair for one as for the other, eh? I'll admit that he outgeneralled me by giving me that putt on the second hole, but the thing that finally grabbed my angora was his infernal concentration. Never saw anything like it! Why, he actually asked me to stand behind him and criticise his swing—while he was shooting, mind you? Asked me to do it! And when I saw that he went along steady as the rock of Gibraltar—well, I *blew,* that's all. I went to pieces. The thing reacted on me. I'll bet that old rascal could listen to you all day long—and never top a ball!"

"You'd lose that bet," said Jay quietly.

"How do you mean—lose it?" demanded Waddles, bristling. "I talked my head off, and he didn't top any, did he?"

"No; and he didn't listen any, either. As a matter of fact, you could have fired a cannon off right at his hip without making him miss a shot."

"You don't mean to tell me——" said Waddles, gaping.

Jay laughed unfeelingly.

"You had a fat chance of talking the old Major out of anything!" said he. "He hasn't advertised it much, because he's rather sensitive about his affliction; but he's——"

"Deaf!" gulped Waddles.

"As a post," finished Jay.

Waddles' jaw dropped.

There was a long, painful silence.

Then Waddles crooked his finger at the waiter.

"Boy!" he called. "Bring me this dinner check!"

A MIXED FOURSOME

I

WHEN the returns were all in, a lot of people congratulated the winners of the mixed-foursome cups, after which the weak-minded ones sympathised with Mary Brooke and Russell Davidson.

Sympathy is a wonderful thing, and so rare that it should not be wasted. Any intelligent person might have seen at a glance that Mary didn't need sympathy; and as for Russell Davidson, there never was a time when he deserved it.

And in all this outpouring of sentiment, this handshaking and back-patting, nobody thought to offer a kind word to old Waddles. Nobody shook him by the hand and told him that he was six of the seven wonders of the world. It seems a pity, now that I look back on it.

Possibly you remember Waddles. He was, is, and probably always will be, an extremely important member of the Yavapai Golf and Country Club. Important, did I say? That

doesn't begin to express it. Omnipotent—that's better.

To begin with, he is chairman of the Greens Committee, holding dominion over every blade of grass which grows on the course. He is intimately acquainted with every gopher hole, hoofprint and drain cover on the club property. Policing two hundred broad acres is a strong man's job, but Waddles attends to it in his spare moments. He waves his pudgy hand and says: "Let there be a bunker here," and lo! the bunker springs up as if by magic. He abolishes sand traps which displease him, and creates new ones. The heathen may rage, and sometimes they do, but Waddles holds on the even tenor of his way, hearing only one vote, and that vote his own.

Then again, he is the official handicapper—another strong man's job—with powers which cannot be overestimated. Some handicappers are mild and apologetic creatures who believe in tempering justice with mercy and pleasing as many people as possible, but not our Waddles.

Heaven pity the wily cup hunter who keeps an improved game under cover in order that he may ease himself into a competition and clean up the silverware!

Waddles hates a cup hunter with a deep and abiding hatred and deals with him accordingly. There was once an 18-handicap man who waltzed blithely through our Spring Handicap, and his worst medal round was something like

85. His fat allowance made all his opponents look silly and he took home a silver water pitcher worth seventy-five dollars.

This was bad enough, but he crowned his infamy by boasting openly that he had outwitted Waddles. The next time the cup hunter had occasion to glance at the handicap list he received a terrible shock.

"Waddy," said this person—and there were tears in his eyes and a sob in his voice—"you know that I'll never be able to play to a four handicap, don't you?"

"Certainly," was the calm response.

"Then what was the idea of putting me at such a low mark?"

"Well," said Waddles with a sweet smile, "I don't mind telling you, in strict confidence: I cut you down to four to keep you honest."

The wretched cup hunter howled like a wolf, but it got him nothing. He is still a four man, and if he lives to be as old as the Dingbats he will never take home another trophy.

Not only is Waddles supreme on the golf course but he dominates the clubhouse as well. He writes us tart letters about shaking dice for money and signs them "House Committee, per W." Really serious matters are dealt with in letters signed "Board of Directors, per W." The old boy is the law and the prophets, the fine Italian hand, the mailed fist, the lord high executioner and the chief justice, and if he

misses you with one barrel he is sure to get you with the other.

You might think that this would be power enough for one weak mortal. You might think that there are some things which Waddles would regard as beyond his jurisdiction. You might think that the little god of love would come under another dispensation—you might think all these things, but you don't know our Waddles. He is afflicted with that strange malady described by the immortal Cap'n Prowse as "the natural gift of authority," and such a man recognises no limits, knows no boundaries, and wouldn't care two whoops if he did. Come to think of it, the Kaiser is now under treatment for the same ailment.

Since I have given you some faint conception of Waddles and his character I will proceed with the plain and simple tale of Mary Brooke, Bill Hawley and Russell Davidson. Beth Rogers was in the foursome too, but she doesn't really count, not being in love with any one but herself.

II

Ladies first is a safe rule, so we will start with Mary. My earliest recollection of this young woman dates back twenty-and-I-won't-say-how-many-more years, at which time she entertained our neighbourhood by reciting nursery rimes—"Twinka, twinka, yitty tar," and all the rest of that stuff.

I knew then that she was an extremely bright child for her age. Her mother told me so. I used to hold her on my lap and let her listen to my watch, and the cordial relations which existed then have lasted ever since. She doesn't sit on my lap any more, of course, but you understand what I mean.

I watched Mary lose her baby prettiness and her front teeth. I watched her pass through that distressing period when she seemed all legs and freckles, to emerge from it a different being—only a little girl still, but with a trace of shyness which was new to me, and a look in her eyes which made me feel that I must be growing a bit old.

About this time I was astounded to learn that Mary had a beau. It was the Hawley kid, who lived on the next block. His parents had named him William, after an uncle with money, but from the time he had been able to walk he had been called Bill. He will always be called Bill, because that's the sort of fellow he is.

As I remember him at the beginning of his love affair Bill was somewhat of a mess, with oversized hands and feet, a shock of hair that never would stay put, and an unfortunate habit of falling all over himself at critical moments. He attached himself to Mary Brooke with all the unselfish devotion of a half-grown Newfoundland pup, minus the pup's rough demonstrations of affection.

He carried Mary's books home from school,

he took her to the little neighbourhood parties, he sent her frilly pink valentines, and once—only once—he stripped his mother's rose garden because it was Mary's birthday. It also happened to be Mrs. Hawley's afternoon to entertain the whist club, and she had been counting on those roses for decorations. If my memory serves me, she allowed Mary to keep the flowers, but she stopped the amount of a florist's bill out of her son's allowance of fifty cents a week. The Hawleys are all practical people.

Mary's father used to fuss and fume and say that he hoped Bill would get over it and park his big clumsy feet on somebody else's front porch, but I don't think he really minded it as much as he pretended he did. Mrs. Brooke often remarked that since it had to be somebody she would rather it would be Bill than any other boy in the neighbourhood. Even in those days there was something solid and dependable about Bill Hawley; he was the sort of kid that could be trusted, and more of a man at sixteen than some fellows will ever be.

During Mary's high-school days several boys carried her books, but not for long, and Bill was always there or thereabouts, waiting patiently in the background. When another youngster had the front porch privilege Bill did not sulk or rock the boat, and if the green-eyed monster was gnawing at his vitals there were no outward signs of anguish. We always knew when one of Mary's little affairs was over because

Bill would be back on the job, nursing his shin on Brooke's front steps and filling the whole block with an air of silent devotion. I suppose he grew to be a habit with Mary; such things do happen once in a while.

Then Bill went away to college, and while he was struggling for a sheepskin Mary entered the débutante period. Some of the women said that she wasn't pretty, but they would have had a hard time proving it to a jury of men. Her features may not have been quite regular, but the general effect was wonderfully pleasing; so the tabbies compromised by calling her attractive. They didn't have a chance to say anything else, because Mary was always the centre of a group of masculine admirers, and if that doesn't prove attraction, what does?

In addition to her good looks she was bright as a new dollar—so bright that she didn't depend entirely on her own cleverness but gave you a chance to be clever yourself once in a while. Mary Brooke knew when to listen. She listened to Waddles once, from one end of a country-club dinner to the other, and he gave her the dead low down on the reformer in politics—a subject on which the old boy is fairly well informed. I think his fatherly interest in her dated from that evening—and incidentally let me say it was the best night's listening that Mary ever did, because if Waddles hadn't been interested—but that's getting ahead of the story.

"There's something to that little Brooke girl!" he told me afterward. "A society bud with brains! Who'd have thought it?"

Bill came ambling home from time to time and picked up the thread of friendship again. It grieves me to state that an Eastern college did not improve his outward appearance to any marked extent. He looked nothing at all like the young men we see in the take-'em-off-the-shelf clothing ads. He was just the same old Bill, with big hands and big feet and more hair than he could manage. He danced the one-step, of course—the only dance ever invented for men with two left feet—but his conception of the fox trot would have made angels weep, and I never realised how much hesitation could be crowded into a hesitation waltz until I saw Bill gyrate slowly and painfully down the floor. Mary always seemed glad to see him, though, and we heard whispers of an engagement, to be announced after Bill had made his escape from the halls of learning. Like most of the whispering done, this particular whisper lacked the vital element of truth, but the women had a lovely time passing it along.

"Isn't it just too perfectly ideal—sweethearts since childhood! Think of it!"

"Yes, we so seldom see anything of the sort nowadays."

"There's one advantage in that kind of match—they won't have to get acquainted with each other after marriage."

"Well, now, I don't know about that. Doesn't one always find that one has married a total stranger? Poor, dear Augustus! I thought I knew him so well, but——"

And so forth, and so on, by the hour. Give a woman a suspicion, and she'll manage to juggle it into a certainty. Shortly before Bill's graduation, the dear ladies at the country club had the whole affair settled, even to the probable date of the wedding, and of course Mary heard the glad news. Naturally, she was annoyed. It annoys any young woman to find the most important event of her life arranged in advance by people who have never taken the trouble to consult her about any of the details.

At this point I am forced to dip into theory, because I can't say what took place inside Mary's pretty little head. I don't know. Perhaps she wanted to teach the gossips a lesson. Perhaps she resented having a husband pitchforked at her by public vote; but however she figured it she needn't have made poor old Bill the goat, and she needn't have fallen in love with Russell Davidson. Waddles says it wasn't love at all—merely an infatuation; but what I'd like to know is this: How are you going to tell one from the other when the symptoms are identical?

III

Personally, I haven't a thing in the world against Russell Davidson. He never did me an

injury and I hope he will never do me a favour. Russell is the sort of chap who is perfectly all right if you happen to like the sort of chap he is. I don't, and that's the end of the matter so far as I am concerned.

He hasn't been with us very long, and still it seems long enough. He came West to grow up with the country, arriving shortly before Bill's graduation, and he brought with him credentials which could not be overlooked, together with an Eastern golf rating which caused Waddles to sit up and take notice.

Ostensibly Russell is in the brokerage business, but he doesn't seem to work much at it. Those who know tell me that it isn't necessary for him to work much at anything, his father having attended to that little matter. Some of the dear ladies were mean enough to hint that Mary had this in mind, but they'll never get me to believe it.

At any rate the gossips soon had a nice juicy topic for conversation, and when Bill came home, wagging his sheepskin behind him, he found the front-porch privilege usurped by a handsome stranger who seemed quite at home in the Brooke household, and, unless I'm very much mistaken, inclined to resent Bill's presence on the premises.

It just happened that I was walking up and down the block smoking an after-dinner cigar on the evening when Bill discovered that he was slated for second-fiddle parts again. Russell's

runabout was standing in front of the Brooke place, there was a dim light in the living room, and an occasional tenor wail from the phonograph. I heard quick, thumping footsteps, a big, lumbering figure came hurrying along the sidewalk—and there was Bill Hawley, grinning at me in the moonlight.

"Attaboy!" he cried, shaking hands vigorously. "How're you? How're all the folks? Gee, it's great to be home again! How's Mary?"

"She's fine," said I. "Haven't you seen her yet?"

"Just got in on the Limited at five o'clock. Thought I'd surprise her. Got a thousand things to tell you. Well, see you later!"

He went swinging up the front steps and rang the bell.

I was finishing my cigar when Bill came out again and started slowly down the walk. His wonderful surprise party had not lasted more than twenty minutes. I had to hail him twice before he heard me. We took a short walk together, and reached the end of the block before Bill opened his mouth. On the corner Bill swung round and faced me: "Who is that fellow?" It wasn't a question; it was a demand for information.

"What fellow?"

"Davis, or Davidson, something like that. Who is he?"

There wasn't a great deal I could tell him.

Bill listened till I got to the end of my string, with a perfectly wooden expression on his homely countenance. Then for the first, last and only time he expressed his opinion of Russell Davidson.

"Humph!" said he. And after a long pause: "Humph!"

You may think that a grunt doesn't express an opinion, but as a matter of fact it's one of the most expressive monosyllables in any language. It can be made to mean almost anything. A ten-minute speech with a lot of firecracker adjectives wouldn't have made Bill's meaning any clearer.

The two grunts which came out of Bill's system were fairly dripping with disapproval.

"It's a wonderful night." I felt the need of saying something. "Must be quite a relief after all that humidity in the East."

"Uh huh."

"I understand you played pretty good golf on the college team, Bill."

"Uh huh."

"We've made a lot of improvements out at the club. You won't know the last nine now."

"Uh huh."

I couldn't resist the temptation of slipping a torpedo under his bows. I thought it might wake him up a trifle.

"Mary is playing a better game now. Davidson has been teaching her some shots."

Bill wanted to open up and say something,

but he didn't know how to go about it. He looked at me almost piteously and I felt ashamed of myself.

"I'll be going now," he mumbled. "Haven't had much sleep the last few nights. Never sleep on a train anyway. See you later."

That was all I got out of him, but it was enough. It wasn't any of my affair, of course, but from the bottom of my heart I pitied the big, clumsy fellow. I felt certain that Mary was giving him the worst of it, and taking the worst of it herself, but what could I do? Absolutely nothing. In life's most important game the spectators are not encouraged to sit on the side lines and shout advice to the players.

As for Bill, I think he fought it out with himself that night and decided to return to his boyhood policy of watchful waiting. It wasn't the first time that he had lost the front-porch privilege, and in the past he had won it back again by keeping under cover and giving the incumbent a chance to become tiresome. Bill declined to play the second-fiddle parts; he took himself out of Mary's orchestra entirely. He did not call on her any more; but I am willing to bet any sum of money, up to ten dollars, that Bill knew how many times a week Russell's runabout stood in front of the Brooke place. Five would have been a fair average.

Russell had things all his own way, and before long we began to hear the same vague whisperings of a wedding, coupled with expres-

sions of sympathy for Bill. Bill heard those whisperings too—trust the dear ladies for that—but he listened to everything with a good-natured grin, and even succeeded in fooling a portion of the female population; but he didn't fool Waddles and he didn't fool me. Bill met Mary at dinner parties and dances now and then, and whenever this happened the women watched every move that he made, and were terribly disappointed because he failed to register deep grief; but Bill never was the sort to wear his heart outside his vest. Russell was very much in evidence at all these meetings, for he took Mary everywhere, and Bill was scrupulously polite to him—the particular brand of politeness which makes a real man want to fight. And thus the summer waned, and the winter season came on—for in our country we have only two seasons—and it was in November that old Waddles finally unbuttoned his lip and informed me that young Mr. Davidson would never do.

It was in the lounging room at the country club. We had finished our round, and I had paid Waddles three balls as usual. It never costs less than three balls to play with him. We were sitting by the window, acquiring nourishment and looking out upon the course. In the near foreground Russell Davidson was teaching Mary Brooke the true inwardness of the chip shot. He wasn't having a great deal of luck. Waddles broke the silence by grunt-

ing. It was a grunt of infinite disgust. I searched my pockets and put a penny on the table.

"For your thoughts," said I.

"They're worth more than that," said Waddles.

"Not to me."

There was a period of silence and then Waddles grunted again.

"Get it off your chest," I advised him.

"That fellow," said Waddles, indicating Russell with a jerk of his thumb, "gives me a pain."

"And me," said I.

"I thought Mary Brooke had some sense," complained Waddles; "but I see now that she's like all the rest—anything with a high shine to it is gold. Now the pure metal often has a dull finish."

"Meaning Bill?" I asked.

"Meaning Bill. He isn't much to look at, but he's on the level, and he worships the very ground she walks on. Why can't she see it?"

"Why can't any woman see it?" I asked him.

"But somebody ought to tell her! Somebody ought to put her wise! Somebody——"

"Well," I interrupted, "why don't you volunteer for the job?"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Waddles. "It's one of the things that can't be done. Tell her and you'd only make matters that much worse. And I thought Mary Brooke had brains!"

There was a long break in the conversation, during which Waddles munched great quantities of pretzels and cheese. Then:

"I wasn't much stuck on that Davidson person the first time I saw him!" His tone was the tone of a man who seeks an argument. "He's a good golfer, I admit that, but he's a cup hunter at heart, he's a rotten hard loser, and—well, he's not on the level!"

"You've been opening his mail?" I asked.

"Not at all. Listen! You know the Santa Ynez Gun Club? Well, he's joined that, among other things. He's a cracking good duck shot. I was down there the other night, and we had a little poker game."

"A little poker game?" said I.

"Table stakes," corrected Waddles. "Davidson was the big winner."

"You're not hinting——"

"Nothing so raw as that. Listen! Joe Herriman was in the game, and playing in the rottenest luck you ever saw. Good hands all the time, understand, but not quite good enough. If he picked up threes he was sure to run into a straight, and if he made a flush there was a full house out against him. Enough to take the heart out of any man. Finally he picked up a small full before the draw—three treys and a pair of sevens. Joe opened it light enough, because he wanted everybody in, but the only man who stayed was Davidson, who drew one card. After the draw Joe bet ten dollars for a

feeler, and Davidson came back at him with the biggest raise of the night—a cool hundred."

"Well," said I, "what was wrong with that?"

"Wait. The hundred-dollar bet started Joe to thinking. He had been bumping into topping hands all the evening, and Davidson knew it.

" 'If I were you,' says Davidson in a nice kind tone of voice, 'I wouldn't call that bet. Luck is against you to-night, and I'd advise you, as a friend, to lay that pat hand down and forget it.'

"Joe looked at him for a long time and then he looked at his cards; you see he'd been beaten so often that he'd lost his sense of values.

" 'You think I hadn't better play these?' asks Joe.

" 'I've given you a tip,' says Davidson. 'I hate to see a man go up against a sure thing.'

" 'Well,' says Joe at last, 'I guess you've done me a favour. It wasn't much of a full anyway,' and he spread his hand on the table. Davidson didn't show his cards—he pitched 'em into the discard and raked in the pot—not more than fifteen dollars outside of his hundred."

"And what of that?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing," said Waddles; "nothing, only I was dealing the next hand, and I arranged to get a flash at the five cards that Davidson tried to bury in the middle of the deck."

"What did he have?"

Waddles snorted angrily.

"Four diamonds and a spade! A four flush, that's what he had! The two sevens alone would have beaten him! And all that sympathetic talk, that bum steer, just to cheat the big loser out of one measly pot! What do you think of a fellow who'd do a trick like that?"

I told him what I thought, and again there was silence and cheese.

"Do you think Mary is going to marry that —that crook?" demanded Waddles.

"That's what they say."

More cheese.

"I'd like to tell her," said Waddles thoughtfully, "but it's just one of the things that isn't being done this season. I'd like to give her a line on that handsome scalawag—before it's too late. I can't waltz up to her and tell her that he's bogus. There must be some other way. But how? How?"

Waddles sighed and attacked the cheese again. You'd hardly think that a man could get an inspiration out of the kind of cheese that our House Committee buys to give away, but before Waddles left the club that evening he informed me that a mixed-foursome tournament wouldn't be half bad—for a change.

"You won't get many entries," said I. "You know how the men fight shy of any golf with women in it."

"Don't want many."

"Then why a tournament?" I asked. "The entry fees won't pay for the cups."

"I'm giving the cups," said Waddles, and investigated the cheese bowl once more. "Two of 'em. One male cup and one female cup. About sixteen dollars they'll set me back, but I've an idea—just a sneaking, lingering scrap of a notion—that I'll get my money's worth."

And he went away mumbling to himself and blowing cracker crumbs out of his mouth.

IV

Of course you know the theory of the mixed foursome. There are four players, two men and two women, and each couple plays one ball. It sounds very simple. Miss Jones and Mr. Brown are partners. Miss Jones drives, and it is up to Mr. Brown to play the next shot from where the ball lies, after which Miss Jones takes another pop at the pill, and so on until the putt sinks. Yes, it sounds like an innocent pastime, but of all forms of golf the mixed foursome carries the highest percentage of danger and explosive material. It is the supreme test of nerves and temper, and the trial-by-acid of the disposition.

In our club there is an unwritten law that no wife shall be partnered with her husband in a mixed-foursome match, because husbands and wives have a habit of saying exactly what they think about each other—a practise which should

be confined to the breakfast table. There was a case once—but let us avoid scandal. She has a new husband and he has a new wife.

Waddles' mixed-foursome tournament was scheduled for a Thursday, and it was amazing how many of the male members discovered that imperative business engagements would keep them from participating in the contest. The women were willing enough to play—they always are, bless 'em!—but it was only after a vast amount of effort and Mexican diplomacy that Waddles was able to lead six goats to the slaughter. Six, did I say? Five. Russell Davidson needed no urging.

The man who gave Waddles the most trouble was Bill Hawley. Bill was polite about it, but firm—oh, very firm. He didn't want any mixed foursomes in his young life, thank you just the same. More than that, he was busy. Waddles had to put it on the ground of a personal favour before Bill showed the first sign of wavering.

When I arrived at the club on Thursday noon I found Waddles sweating over the handicaps for his six couples. Now it is a cinch to handicap two women or two men if they are to play as partners, but to handicap a woman and a man is quite another matter, and all recognised rules go by the board. I watched the old boy for some time, but I couldn't make head or tail of his system. Finally I asked him how he handicapped a mixed foursome.

"With prayer," said Waddles. "With

prayer, and in fear and trembling. And sometimes that ain't any good."

I noted that he had given Mary Brooke and Russell Davidson the lowest mark—10. Beth Rogers and Bill Hawley were next with 16, and the other couples ranged on upward to the blue sky.

"Of course," I suggested, "the low handicap is something of a compliment, but haven't you slipped Davidson a bit the worst of it?"

"Not at all," growled Waddles. "He was just crazy to get into this thing, and he wouldn't have been unless he figured to have a cinch; consequently, hence and by reason of which I've given him a mark that'll make him draw right down to his hand. He won't play any four-flush here." Waddles then arranged the personnel of the foursomes, and jotted down the order in which they would leave the first tee. When I saw which quartette would start last I offered another suggestion.

"You're not helping Bill's game any," said I. "You know that he doesn't like Davidson, and——"

Waddles stopped me with his frozen-faced, stuffed-owl stare. In deep humiliation I confess that at the time I attributed it to his distaste for criticism. I realise now that it must have been amazement at my stupidity.

"Excuse me for living," said I with mock humility.

"There is no excuse," said Waddles heavily.

Bill turned up on the tee at the last moment, and if he didn't like the company in which he found himself he masked his feelings very well.

"How do, Mary? Beth, this is a pleasure. How are you, Davidson? Ladies first, I presume?"

"Drive, Miss Rogers," said Davidson.

Now a fluffy blonde is all right, I suppose, if she wears a hair net. Beth doesn't, and her golden aureole would make a Circassian woman jealous. Still, there are people who think Beth is a beauty. I more than half suspect that Beth is one of them. Beth drove, and the ball plumped into the cross bunker.

"Oh, partner!" she squealed. "Can you ever forgive me?"

"That's all right," Bill assured her. "I've often been in there myself. Takes a good long shot to carry that bunker."

"It's perfectly dear of you to say so!"

"Fore!" said Mary, who was on the tee, and the conversation ceased.

"Better shoot to the left," advised Russell, "and go round the end of the bunker."

Mary stopped waggling her club to look at him. If there is anything in which the female of the golfing species takes sinful pride it is the length of her drive. She likes to stand up on a tee used by the men and smack the ball over the cross bunker. She wouldn't trade a two-hundred-yard drive for twenty perfect approach shots. She may be a wonder on the putting

green, but she offers herself no credit for that. It is the long tee shot that takes her eye—the drive that skims the bunker and goes on up the course. Waddles says the proposition of sex equality has a bearing on the matter, but I claim that it is just ordinary, everyday pride in being able to play a man's game, man fashion.

Coming from a total stranger, that suggestion about driving to the left would have been regarded as a deadly insult; coming from Russell——

"But I think I can carry it," said Mary with a tiny pout.

"Change your stance and drive to the left." The suggestion had become a command.

"Fore!" said Mary again—and whacked the ball straight into the bunker—straight into the middle of it.

"Now, you see?" Russell was aggravated, and showed it. "If you had changed your stance and put that ball somewhere to the left you might have given me a chance to reach the green. As it is——"

He was still enlarging upon her offence as they moved away from the tee. Mary did not answer him, but she gave Beth a bright smile, as much as to say, "What care I?" Bill trailed along in the rear, juggling a niblick, his homely face wiped clean of all expression.

There wasn't much to choose between the second shots—both lies were about as bad as could

be—but Russell got out safely and Bill duplicated the effort.

Beth then elected to use her brassy, and sliced the ball into the long grass. Of course she had to wail about it.

"Isn't that just too maddening? Partner, I'm so sorry!"

"Don't you care," grinned Bill. "That's just my distance with a mashie. And as for long grass, I dote on it."

Mary was taking her brassy out of the bag when Russell butted in again—with excellent advice, I must confess.

"You can't reach the green anyway," said he, "so take an iron and keep on the course."

There was a warning flash in Mary's eye which a wiser man would not have ignored.

"Remember you've got a partner," urged Russell. "Take an iron, there's a good girl."

"Oh, Russell! Do be still; you fuss me so!"

"But, my dear! I'm only trying to help——"

The swish of the brassy cut his explanation neatly in two, and the ball went sailing straight for the distant flag—a very pretty shot for any one to make.

"Oh, a peach!" cried Bill. "A peach!"

"And you," said Mary, turning accusingly to Russell, "you wanted me to take an iron!"

"Because you can keep straighter with an iron," argued Davidson.

"Wasn't that ball straight enough to please you?" asked Mary with just a touch of malice.

"You had luck," was the ungracious response, "but it doesn't follow that all your wooden-club shots will turn out as well. The theory of the mixed foursome is to leave your partner with a chance to hit the ball."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Beth. "Now you're making me feel like a criminal!"

"Lady," said Bill, "if I don't mind, why should you?"

"I think you're an angel!" gushed Beth.

"Yep," replied Bill, "I am; but don't tell anybody."

While Mary and Russell were discussing the theory of the mixed foursome old Bill made a terrific mashie shot out of the grass, and the ball reached the edge of the green. Beth applauded wildly, Mary chimed in, but Davidson did not open his mouth. He was irritated, and made no secret of it, but his irritation did not keep him from dropping the next shot on the putting green.

Bill didn't even blink when Beth took her putter and overran the hole by ten feet. Beth said she knew he'd never, never speak to her again in this world, and she couldn't blame him if he didn't.

"Well," said Bill cheerfully, "you gave the ball a chance, anyhow. That's the main thing. It's better to be over than short."

"You're a perfect dear!" said Beth. "I'll do better—see if I don't."

Mary then prepared to putt, Russell's ap-

proach having left her twelve feet short of the hole. "And be sure to get it there," cautioned her partner. "It's uphill, you know. Allow for it."

Mary bit her lip and hit the grass an inch behind the ball. It rolled something less than four feet.

"Hit the ball! Hit the ball!" snapped Russell angrily. "What's the matter with you to-day?"

Mary apologised profusely—probably to keep Russell quiet; and she laughed too—a dry, hard little laugh that didn't have any fun in it. Bill glared at Davidson for an instant, and his mouth opened, but he swallowed whatever impulse was troubling him, and carefully laid his ball on the lip of the cup for a two-inch putt that not even Beth could have missed. Russell then holed his long one, which seemed to put him in a better humour, and the men started for the second tee. In mixed foursomes the drive alternates.

Mary and Beth took the short cut used by the caddies, and I followed them at a discreet distance. Mary babbled incessantly about everything in the world but golf, which was her way of conveying the impression that nothing unusual had happened; and Beth, womanlike, helped her out by pretending to be deeply interested in what Mary was saying. And yet they tell you that if women could learn to bluff they would make good poker players!

As I waited for the men to drive I thought of the Mary Brooke I used to know—the leggy little girl with her hair in pigtails—and I remembered that in those days she would stand just so much teasing from the boys, and then somebody would be slapped—hard. Had she changed so much, I wondered?

On the third hole Russell began nagging again, and Bill's face was a study. For two cents I think he would have choked him. Mary tried to carry it off with a smile, but it was a weak effort. Nothing but absolute obedience and recognition of his right to give orders would satisfy Russell.

"It's no use your telling me now that you're sorry," he scolded after Mary had butchered a spoon shot on Number Three. "You won't take advice when it's offered. I told you not to try that confounded spoon. A spoon is no club for a beginner."

Mary gasped.

"But—I'm not a beginner! I've been playing ever and ever so long! And I like that spoon."

"I don't care what you like. If we win this thing you must do as I say."

"Oh! So that's it—because you want to win?"

"What do you think I entered for—exercise? Nothing to beat but a lot of dubs—and you're not even trying!"

"Bill is no dub." Mary flared up a bit in defence of her old friend.

"Ho!" sneered Russell. "So you call him Bill, do you?"

I lost the thread of the conversation there because Mary lowered her voice, but she must have told the young man something for the good of his soul. Anyway he was in a savage frame of mind when he stepped on the fourth tee. He wanted to quarrel with some one, but it wouldn't have been healthy to pick on old Bill, and Russell probably realised it. Bill hadn't spoken to him since the first hole, and to be thus calmly ignored was fresh fuel on a smouldering fire.

There was another explosion on Number Four—such a loud one that everybody heard it.

"There you go again!" snarled Russell. "I give you a perfect drive—I leave you in a position where all you have to do is pop a little mashie over a bunker to the green—and see what a mess you've made of it! I'm sorry I ever entered this fool tournament!"

"I'm sorry too," said Mary quietly, and walked away from him leaving him fuming.

It must have been an uncomfortable situation for Beth and Bill. They kept just as far away from the other pair as they could—an exhibition of delicacy which I am sure Mary appreciated—and pretended not to hear the nasty things Russell said, though there were times when Bill had to hide his clenched fists in his coat pockets. He wanted to hit some-

thing, and hit it hard, so he took it out on the ball, with excellent results. And no matter what Beth did or did not do Bill never had anything for her but a cheery grin and words of encouragement. They got quite chummy, those two, and once or twice I thought I surprised resentment in Mary's eye. I may have been mistaken.

Russell grew more rabid as the round proceeded, possibly because Mary's manner was changing. After the seventh hole, where Russell said it was a waste of time to try to teach a woman anything about the use of a wooden club, Mary made not the slightest attempt to placate him. She deliberately ignored his advice, and did it smilingly. She became very gay, and laughed a great deal—too much, in fact—and of course her attitude did not help matters to any appreciable extent. A bully likes to have a victim who cringes under the lash.

The last nine was painful, even to a spectator, and if Russell Davidson had been blessed with the intelligence which God gives a goose he would have kept his mouth shut; but no, he seemed determined to force Mary to take some notice of his remarks. The strangest thing about it was that some fairly good golf was played by all hands. Even fuzzy-headed little Beth pulled off some pretty shots, whereupon Bill cheered uproariously. I think he found relief in making a noise.

While they were on the seventeenth green I

spied old Waddles against the skyline, cutting off the entire sunset, and I climbed the hill to tell him the news. You may believe it or not, but up to that moment I had overlooked Waddles entirely. I had been stupid enough to think that the show I had been witnessing was an impromptu affair—a thing of pure chance, lacking a stage manager. Just as I reached the top of the hill, enlightenment came to me—came in company with Mary's laugh, rippling up from below. At a distance it sounded genuine. A shade of disappointment crossed Waddles' wide and genial countenance.

"So it didn't work," said he. "It didn't work—and I'm sixteen dollars to the bad. Hey! Quit pounding me on the back! Anybody but a born ass would have known the whole thing was cooked up for Mary's benefit—and you've just tumbled, eh? Now then, what has he done?"

Briefly, and in words of one syllable, I sketched Russell's activities. Waddles wagged his head soberly.

"Treated her just the same as if he was already married to her, eh? A mixed foursome is no-o-o place for a mean man; give him rope enough and he'll hang himself. How do they stand?"

I had not been keeping the score, so we walked down the hill to the eighteenth tee.

"Pretty soft for you folks," said Waddles

with a disarming grin. "Pretty soft. You've only got to beat a net 98."

"Zat so?" asked Bill carelessly, but Russell snatched a score card from his pocket. Instantly his whole manner changed. The sullen look left his face; his eyes sparkled; he smiled.

"We're here in 94," said Russell. "Ten off of that—84. Why—it's a cinch, Mary, a cinch! And I thought you'd thrown it away!"

"And you?" asked Waddles, turning to Bill.

"Oh," said Russell casually, "they've got a gross of 102. What's their handicap?"

"Sixteen," answered Waddles.

"A net 86." Russell became thoughtful. "H'm-m. Close enough to be interesting. Still, they've got to pick up three strokes on us here. Mary, all you've got to do is keep your second shot out of trouble. Go straight, and I'll guarantee to be on the green in three."

Mary didn't say anything. She was watching Waddles—Waddles, with his lip curled into the scornful expression which he reserves for cup hunters and winter members who try to hog the course.

Russell drove and the ball sailed over the direction post at the summit of the hill.

"That'll hold 'em!" he boasted. "Now just keep straight, Mary, and we've got 'em licked!"

Bill followed with another of his tremendous tee shots—two hundred pounds of beef and at least a thousand pounds of contempt behind the pill—and away they went up the path. Rus-

sell fell in beside Mary, and at every step he urged upon her the vital importance of keeping the ball straight. He simply bubbled and fizzed with advice, and he smiled as he offered it. I never saw a man change so in a short space of time.

"Well, partner," apologised Beth, "I'm sorry. If I'd only played a tiny bit better——"

"Shucks!" laughed Bill. "Don't you care. What's a little tin cup between friends?"

"A tin cup!" growled Waddles. "Where do you get that stuff? Sterling silver, you poor cow!"

Bill's drive was the long one, so it was up to Mary to play first. Our last hole requires fairly straight shooting, because the course is paralleled at the right by the steep slope of a hill, and at the bottom of that hill is a creek bed, lined on either side by tangled brush and heavy willows. A ball sliced so as to reach the top of the incline is almost certain to go all the way down. On the other side of the fair green there is a wide belt of thick long grass in which a ball may easily be lost. No wonder Russell advised caution.

"Take an iron," said he, "and never mind trying for distance. All we need is a six."

"Boy," said Mary, addressing the caddie, "my brassy, please."

"Give her an iron," countermanded Russell. "Mary, you must listen to me. We've got this thing won now——"

"Fore!" said Mary in the tone of voice which all women possess, but most men do not hear it until after they are married. Russell fell back, stammering a remonstrance, and Mary took her practise swings—four of them. Then she set herself as carefully as if her entire golfing career depended on that next shot. Her back swing was deliberate, the club head descended in a perfect arc, she kept her head down, and she followed through beautifully—but at the click of contact a strangled howl of anguish went up from her partner. She had hit the ball with the rounded toe of the club, instead of the flat driving surface, and the result was a flight almost at right angles with the line of the putting green—a wretched round-house slice ticketed for the bottom of the creek bed. By running at top speed Russell was able to catch sight of the ball as it bounded into the willows. Mary looked at Waddles and smiled—the first real smile of the afternoon.

"Isn't that provoking?" said she.

Judging by the language which floated up out of the ravine it must have been all of that. Russell found the ball at last, under the willows and half buried in the sand, and the recovery which he made was nothing short of miraculous. He actually managed to clear the top of the hill. Even Waddles applauded the shot.

Beth took an iron and played straight for the flag. Russell picked the burs from his flannel trousers and counted the strokes on his fingers.

"Hawley will put the next one on the green," said he, "and that means a possible five—a net of 91. A six will win for us; and for pity's sake, Mary, for my sake, get up there somewhere and give me a chance to lay the ball dead!"

Waddles sniffed.

"He's quit bossing and gone to begging," said he. "Well, if I was Mary Brooke—— Holy mackerel! She's surely not going to take another shot at it with that brassy!"

But that was exactly what Mary was preparing to do. Russell pleaded, he entreated, and at last he raved wildly; he might have spared his breath.

"Cheer up!" said Mary with a chilly little smile. "I won't slice this one. You watch me." She kept her promise—kept it with a savage hook, which sailed clear across the course and into the thick grass. The ball carried in the rough seventy-five yards from the putting green, and disappeared without even a bounce.

"That one," whispered Waddles, sighing contentedly, "is buried a foot deep. It begins to look bad for love's young dream. Bill, you're away."

Russell, his shoulders hunched and his chin buried in his collar, lingered long enough to watch Bill put an iron shot on the putting green, ten feet from the flag. Then he wandered off into the rough and relieved his feelings by growling at the caddie. He did not quit, however; the true cup hunter never quits. His

niblick shot tore through that tangle of thick grass, cut under the ball and sent it spinning high in the air. It stopped rolling just short of the green.

We complimented him again, but he was past small courtesies. Our reward was a black scowl, which we shared with Mary.

"Lay it up!" said he curtly. "A seven may tie 'em. Lay it up!"

By this time quite a gallery had gathered to witness the finish of the match. In absolute silence Mary drew her putter from the bag and studied the shot. It was an absurdly simple one—a 30-foot approach over a level green, and all she had to do was to leave Russell a short putt. Then if Beth missed her ten-footer——

"It's fast," warned Russell. "It's fast, so don't hit it too hard!"

Even as he spoke the putter clicked against the ball, and instantly a gasp of dismay went up from the feminine spectators. I was watching Russell Davidson, and I can testify that his face turned a delicate shade of green. I looked for the ball, and was in time to see it skate merrily by the hole, "going a mile a minute," as Waddles afterward expressed it. It rolled clear across the putting green before it stopped.

Mary ignored the polite murmur of sympathy from the gallery.

"Never up, never in," said she with a cheerful smile. "Russell, I'm afraid you're away."

Waddles pinched my arm.

"Did you get that stuff?" he breathed into my ear. "Did you get it? She threw him down —threw him down cold!"

Russell seemed to realise this, but he made a noble effort to hole the putt. A third miracle refused him, and then Beth Rogers put her ball within three inches of the cup.

"Put it down!" grunted Russell. "Sink it —and let's get it done with!"

Bill tapped the ball into the hole, and the match was over.

"Why—why," stuttered Beth, "then—we've *won!*"

At this point the hand-shaking began. I was privileged to hear one more exchange of remarks between the losers as they started for the clubhouse.

"We had it won—if you'd only listened to me——" Russell began.

"Ah!" said Mary, "you seem to forget that I've been listening to you all the afternoon—listening and learning!"

That very same evening I was sitting on my front porch studying the stars and meditating upon the mutability of human relationships.

A familiar runabout drew up at the Brooke house, and a young man passed up the walk, moving with a stiff and stately stride. In exactly twelve minutes and thirty-two seconds by my watch the young man came out again, bounced down the steps, jumped into his car,

slammed the door with a bang like a pistol shot, and departed from the neighbourhood with a grinding and a clashing of gears which might have been heard for half a mile.

The red tail light had scarcely disappeared down the street when big Bill Hawley lumbered across the Brooke lawn, took the front steps at a bound and rang the doorbell.

Not being of an inquisitive and a prying nature, I cannot be certain how long he remained, but at 11:37 I thought I heard a door close, and immediately afterward some one passed under my window whistling loudly and unmelodiously. The selection of the unknown serenader was that pretty little thing which describes the end of a perfect day.

"SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR"

I

THE front porch of our clubhouse is a sort of reserved-seat section from which we witness the finish of all important matches. The big wicker rocking-chairs command the eighteenth putting green, as well as the approach to it, and when nothing better offers we watch the dub foursomes come straggling home, herding the little white pills in front of them.

We were doing this only yesterday—Waddles, the Bish and yours truly—and Waddles was picking the winners and losers at a distance of three hundred yards. The old rascal is positively uncanny at that sort of thing; in fact, he rather prides himself on his powers of observation. The Bish was arguing with him, as usual. Of course he isn't really a bishop, but he has a long, solemn ecclesiastical upper lip and a heavy manner of trundling out the most commonplace remarks, so we call him the Bish, and there is nothing he can do about it. In justice to all parties concerned I feel it my

duty to state that in every other way he is quite unlike any bishop I have ever met.

"Hello!" said Waddles, sitting up straight. "Here's the Old Guard—what's left of it, at least."

Away down to the right of the sycamore trees a single figure topped the brow of the hill and stalked along the sky line. There was no mistaking the long, thin legs or the stiff swing with which they moved.

"Walks like a pair of spavined sugar tongs," was Waddles' comment. "You can tell Pete Miller as far as you can see him."

A second figure shot suddenly into view—the figure of a small, nervous man who brandished a golf club and danced from sheer excess of emotion, but even at three hundred yards it was evident that there was no joy in that dance. Waddles chuckled.

"Bet you anything you like," said he, "that Sam Totten sliced his tee shot into the apricot orchard. He's played about four by now—and they're cutthroating it on the drink hole, same as they always do. . . . About time for Jumbo to be putting in an appearance."

While he was speaking a tremendous form loomed large on the sky line, dwarfing Miller and Totten. Once on level ground this giant struck a rolling gait and rapidly overhauled his companions—overhauled them in spite of two hundred and sixty pounds and an immense

paunch which swayed from side to side as he walked.

"Little Jumbo," said Waddles, sinking back in his chair. "Little Jumbo, with his bag of clubs tucked under his left arm—one driver and all of three irons. He carries that awful load because his doctor tells him he ought to reduce. And he eats four pieces of apple pie *à la mode* with his lunch. But a fine old fellow at that. . . . Well, I notice it's still a threesome."

"Notice again," said the Bish, pointing to the left of the sycamores.

Waddles looked, and rose from his chair with a grunt of amazement. A fourth figure came dragging itself up the slope of the hill—the particular portion of the slope of the hill where the deepest trouble is visited upon a sliced second shot. Judging by his appearance and manner this fourth golfer had been neck-deep in grief, to say nothing of cactus and manzanita. His head was hanging low on his breast, his shoulders were sagging, his feet were shuffling along the ground, and he trailed a golf club behind him. When a man trails a club to the eighteenth putting green it is a sure sign that all is over but the shouting; and the wise observer will do his shouting in a whisper. Waddles sat down suddenly.

"Well, as I live and breathe and run the Yavapai Golf and Country Club!" he ejaculated, "there's my old friend, Mr. Peacock, with all his tail feathers pulled out! The deserter

has joined the colours again, and the Old Guard is recruited to full war strength once more! They've actually taken him back, after the way he's acted, too! Now what do you think of that, eh?"

"If you ask me," said the Bish in his booming chest notes, "I'd say it was just a case of *similia similibus curantur.*"

"Nothing of the sort!" said Waddles, bristling instantly; "and besides, I don't know what you mean. Bish, when you cut loose that belly barytone of yours you always remind me of an empty barrel rolling down the cellar stairs—a lot of noise, but you never spill anything worth mopping up. Come again with that foreign stuff."

"*Similia similibus curantur,*" repeated the Bish. "That's Latin."

Waddles shook his head.

"In this case," said he, "your word will have to be sufficient. While you were hog-wrastling Cæsar's Commentaries I was down in the Indian Territory mastering the art of driving eight mules with a jerk line. I learned to swear some in Choctaw and Cherokee, but that was as far as I got. Break that Latin up into little ones. Slip it to me in plain unvarnished United States."

"Well, then," said the Bish, rolling a solemn eye in my direction, "that's the same as saying that the hair of the dog cures the bite."

"The hair of the dog," repeated Waddles,

wrinkling his brow. "The hair—of—the—dog. . . . H'm-m."

"Oh, it's deep stuff," said the Bish. "Take a good long breath and dive for it."

"The only time I ever heard that hair-of-the-dog thing mentioned," said Waddles, "was the morning after the night before. Peacock doesn't drink."

The Bish made use of a very unorthodox expletive.

"Something ailed your friend Peacock," said he, "and something cured him. Think it over."

Slowly the light of intelligence dawned in Waddles' eyes. He began to laugh inwardly, quivering like a mould of jelly, but the joke was too big to remain inside him. It burst forth, first in chuckles, then in subdued guffaws, and finally in whoops and yells, and as he whooped he slapped his fat knees and wallowed in his chair.

"Why," he panted, "I saw it all the time—of course I did! It was just your fool way of putting it! The hair of the dog—oh, say, that's rich! Make a note of that Latin thing, Bish. I want to spring it on the Reverend Father Murphy!"

"Certainly—but where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"Me?" said Waddles. "I'm going to do something I've never done before. I'm going to raise a man's handicap from twelve to eighteen!"

He went away, still laughing, and I looked over toward the eighteenth green. Pete Miller was preparing to putt, Sam Totten and Jumbo were standing side by side, and in the background was Henry Peacock, his hands in his pockets, his cap tilted down over his eyes and his lower lip entirely out of control. His caddie was already on the way to the shed with the bag of clubs.

"From twelve handicap to eighteen," said I. "That's more or less of an insult. Think he'll stand for it?"

"He'll stand for anything right now," said the Bish. "Look at him! He's picked up his ball—on the drink hole too. Give him the once over—'mighty somnambulist of a vanished dream!'"

II

As far back as my earliest acquaintance with the royal and ancient game, the Old Guard was an institution of the Yavapai Golf and Country Club—a foursome cemented by years and usage, an association recognised as permanent, a club within the club—four eighteen-handicap men, bound by the ties of habit and hopeless mediocrity. The young golfer improves his game and changes his company, graduating from Class B into Class A; the middle-aged golfer is past improvement, so he learns his limitations, hunts his level and stays there. Peter Miller, Frank Woodson, Henry Peacock and Sam Totten were

fixtures in the Grand Amalgamated Order of Dubs, and year in and year out their cards would have averaged something like ninety-seven. They were oftener over the century mark than below it.

Every golf club has a few permanent foursomes, but most of them are held together by common interests outside the course. For instance, we have a bankers' foursome, an insurance foursome and a wholesale-grocery foursome, and the players talk shop between holes. We even have a foursome founded on the ownership of an automobile, a jitney alliance, as Sam Totten calls it; but the Old Guard cannot be explained on any such basis, nor was it a case of like seeking like.

Peter Miller, senior member, is grey and silent and as stiff as his own putter shaft. He is the sort of man who always lets the other fellow do all the talking and all the laughing, while he sits back with the air of one making mental notes and reservations. Peter is a corporation lawyer who seldom appears in court, but he loads the gun for the young and eloquent pleader and tells him what to aim at and when to pull the trigger. A solid citizen, Peter, and a useful one.

Frank Woodson, alias Jumbo, big and genial and hearty, has played as Miller's partner for years and years, and possesses every human quality that Peter lacks. They say of Frank—and I believe it—that in all his life he never hurt

a friend or lost one. Frank is in the stock-raising business at present, and carries a side line of blue-blooded dogs. He once made me a present of one, but I am still his friend.

A year ago I would have set against Henry Peacock's name the words "colourless" and "neutral." A year ago I thought I knew all about him; now I am quite certain that there is something in Henry Peacock's nature that will always baffle me. Waddles swears that Peacock was born with his fingers crossed and one hand on his pocketbook, but that is just his extravagant way of putting things. Henry has shown me that it is possible to maintain a soft, yielding exterior, and yet be hard as adamant inside. He has also demonstrated that a meek man's pride is a thing not lightly dismissed. I have revised all my estimates of H. Peacock, retired capitalist.

Last of all we have Samuel Totten, youngest of the Old Guard by at least a dozen years. How he ever laughed his way into that close corporation is a mystery, but somewhere in his twenties he managed it. Sam is a human firebrand, a dash of tabasco, a rough comedian and catch-as-catch-can joker. Years have not tamed him, but they have brought him into prominence as a consulting specialist in real estate and investments. Those who should know tell that Sam Totten can park his itching feet under an office desk and keep them there long enough to swing a big deal, but I prefer to think of him

as the rather florid young man who insists on joining the hired orchestra and playing snare-drum solos during the country-club dances, much to the discomfiture of the gentleman who owns the drum. You will never realise how poor Poor Butterfly is until you hear Sam Totten execute that melody upon his favourite instrument.

These four men met twice a week, rain or shine, without the formality of telephoning in advance. Each one knew that, barring flood, fire or act of God, the others would be on hand, fed, clothed and ready to leave the first tee at one-fifteen P. M. If one of the quartette happened to be sick or out of town the others would pick up a fourth man and take him round the course with them, but that fourth man recognised the fact that he was not of the Old Guard, but merely with it temporarily. He was never encouraged to believe that he had found a home.

Imagine then, this permanent foursome, this coalition of fifteen years' standing, this sacred institution, smitten and smashed by a bolt from the blue. And like most bolts from the blue it picked out the most unlikely target. Henry Peacock won the Brutus B. Hemmingway Cup!

Now as golf cups go the Hemmingway Cup is quite an affair—eighteen inches from pedestal to brim, solid silver of course, engraved and scrolled and chased within an inch of its life. Mr. Hemmingway puts up a new cup each year, the conditions of play being that the trophy

shall go to the man making the best net score. A Class-B man usually wins it with a handicap of eighteen or twenty-four and the Class-A men slightingly refer to Mr. Hemmingway's trophy as "the dub cup." Sour grapes, of course.

I remember Mr. Peacock's victory very well; in fact, I shall never forget it. On that particular afternoon my net score was seventy-one, five strokes under our par, and for half an hour or so I thought the Hemmingway Cup was going home with me. I recall trying to decide whether it would show to best advantage on the mantel in the living room or on the sideboard in the dining room. Numbers of disappointed contestants offered me their congratulations—they said it was about time I won something, even with the assistance of a fat handicap—and for half an hour I endeavoured to bear my honours with becoming modesty. Waddles brought the Hemmingway Cup over and put it in the middle of the table.

" 'S all yours, I guess," said he. "Nobody out now but the Old Guard. Not one of them could make an 88 with a lead pencil, and that's what they've got to do to beat you. Might as will begin to buy."

I began to buy, and while I was signing the first batch of tags the Old Guard came marching in from the eighteenth green. Sam Totten was in the lead, walking backward and twirling his putter as a drum major twirls a baton. Frank Woodson and Peter Miller were acting

as an escort of honour for Henry Peacock, and I began to have misgivings. I also ceased signing tags.

The door of the lounging room crashed open and Sam Totten entered, dragging Henry Peacock behind him. Miller and Woodson brought up the rear.

"Hey, Waddles!" shouted Sam. "What do you think of this old stiff? He shot an eighty-two; he did, on the level!"

"An eighty-two?" said I. "Then his net was——"

"Sixty-four," murmured Mr. Peacock with an apologetic smile. "Yes—ah—sixty-four."

"The suffering Moses!" gulped Waddles. "How did he do it?"

"He played golf," said Peter Miller. "Kept his tee shots straight, and holed some long putts."

"Best round he ever shot in his life!" Woodson chimed in. "Won three balls from me, but it's a pleasure to pay 'em, Henry, on account of your winning the cup! Who'd have thought it?"

"And we're proud of him!" cried Sam Totten. "I'm proud of him! He's my partner! An eighty-two—think of an old stiff like him shooting an eighty-two! One foot in the grave, and he wins a cup sixteen hands high and big as a horse! Cheers, gentlemen, cheers for the Old Guard! It dies, but it never surrenders!"

"Here," said I, thrusting the rest of the tags

into Henry's limp and unresisting hand. "You sign these."

"But," said he, "I—I didn't order anything, and I won the drink hole."

"You won the cup too, didn't you?" demanded Waddles. "Winner always buys—buys for everybody. Boy, bring the rest of those tags back here and let Mr. Peacock sign them too. Winner always buys, Henry. That's a club rule."

Mr. Peacock sat down at the table, put on his glasses and audited those tags to the last nickel. After he had signed them all he picked up the Hemmingway Cup and examined it from top to bottom.

"Can you beat that?" whispered Waddles in my ear. "The old piker is trying to figure, with silver as low as it is, whether he's ahead or behind on the deal!"

"Well, boys," said Sam Totten, standing on his chair and waving his arms, "here's to the Old Guard! We won a cup at last! Old Henry won it; but it's all in the family, ain't it, Henry? Betcher life it is! The Old Guard—drink her up, and drink her down!"

Frank Woodson dropped his big ham of a hand on Henry Peacock's shoulder.

"I couldn't have been half so tickled if I'd won it myself!" said he. "You see, you never won a cup before. I won one once—runner-up in the fifth flight over at San Gabriel. Nice cup, silver and all that, but you've got to have a mag-

nifying glass to *see* it. Now this Hemmingway Cup, Henry, is a regular old he cup. You can't put it where your visitors won't find it. You can be proud of it, old son, and we're proud of you."

"Same here," said Peter Miller, and his face twisted into something remotely resembling a smile. "Did my heart good to see the old boy laying those tee shots out in the middle every time. We're all proud of you, Henry."

"Proud!" exclaimed Sam Totten. "I'm so proud I'm all out of shape!"

Peacock didn't have much to say. He sat there smiling his tight little smile and looking at the silver cup. I believe that even then the idea of desertion had entered into his little two-by-four soul. There was a thoughtful look in his eyes, and he didn't respond to Totten's hilarity with any great degree of enthusiasm.

"What was it the admiral said at Santiago?" asked Sam. "'There's glory enough for us all!' Wasn't that it?"

"Mph!" grunted Waddles. "Since you're getting into famous remarks of history, what was it the governor of North Carolina——"

"I think I'll take my bath now," interrupted Henry Peacock, rising.

"You will not!" cried Sam Totten. "I'm going to buy. Jumbo here is going to buy. Pete is going to buy. Where do you get that bath stuff? We don't win a cup every day, Henry. Sit down!"

An hour later Waddles emerged from the shower room, looking very much like an overgrown cupid in his abbreviated underwear. Henry Peacock had been waiting for him. The Hemmingway Cup, in its green felt bag, dangled from his wrist. My locker is directly across the alley from Waddles', and I overheard the entire conversation.

"I—I just wanted to say," began Henry, "that any cut you might want to make in my handicap will be all right with me."

Waddles growled. He has never yet found it necessary to consult a victim before operating on his handicap. There was a silence and then Henry tried again.

"I really think my handicap ought to be cut," said he.

"Oh, it'll be *cut* all right!" said Waddles cheerfully. "Don't you worry about that. Any old stiff who brings in a net of sixty-four has a cut coming to him. Leave it to me!"

"Well," said Henry, "I just wanted you to know how I felt about it. I—I want to be quite frank with you. Of course, I probably won't shoot an eighty-two every time out"—here Waddles gasped and plumped down on the bench outside his locker—"but when a man brings in a net score that is twelve strokes under the par of the course I think some notice should be taken of it."

"Oh, you do, do you? Listen, Henry! Since

we're going to be frank with each other, what do you think your new handicap ought to be?" Waddles was stringing him of course, but Henry didn't realise it.

"I think ten would be about right," said he calmly.

"Ten!" barked Waddles. "The suffering Moses! Ten! Henry, are you sure you're quite well—not overexcited or anything?"

"All I had was four lemonades."

"Ah!" said Waddles. "Four lemonades—and Sam Totten winked at the bar boy every time. Why, if I cut you from eighteen to ten that'll put you in Class A!"

"I think that's where I belong."

"I'll have to talk with the head bar boy," said Waddles. "He shouldn't be so reckless with that gin. It costs money these days. Listen to me, Henry. Take hold of your head with both hands and try to get what I say. You went out to-day and shot your fool head off. You played the best round of golf in your long and sinful career. You made an eighty-two. You'll never make an eighty-two again as long as you live. It would be a crime to handicap you on to-day's game, Henry. It would be manslaughter to put you in Class A. You don't belong there. If you want me to cut you I'll put you down to sixteen, and even then you won't play to that mark unless you're lucky."

"I think I belong at ten," said Peacock. I

began to appreciate that line about the terrible insistence of the meek.

"Get out of here!" ordered Waddles, suddenly losing his patience. "Go home and pray for humility, Henry. Lay off the lemonade when Sam Totten is in the crowd. Lemonade is bad for you. It curdles the intelligence and warps the reasoning faculties. Shoo! Scat! Mush on! Vamose! Beat it! Hurry up! *Wiki-wiki!* Chop-chop! *Schnell!*"

"Then you won't cut me to ten?"

"I—will—not!"

Henry sighed and started for the door. He turned with his hand on the knob.

"I still think I belong there," was his parting shot.

"Might as well settle this thing right now," said Waddles to himself. Then he lifted up his voice in a howl that made the electric lights quiver. "Send Tom in here!"

The head bar boy appeared, grinning from ear to ear.

"Tom," said Waddles, "don't you know you oughtn't to slip a shot of gin into an old man's lemonade?"

"Ain't nobody gits gin in his lemonade, suh, 'less he awdeh it thataway."

"What did Mr. Peacock have?"

"Plain lemonade, suh."

"No kick in it at all?"

"Not even a wiggle, suh."

"That'll do," said Waddles; and Tom went

back to his work. There was a long silence. By his laboured breathing I judged that Waddles was lacing his shoes. Once more he thought aloud.

"Tom wouldn't lie to me, so it wasn't gin. Now, I wonder. . . . I wonder if that old coot has got what they call 'delusions of grandeur'?"

III

On the Monday following the contest for the Hemmingway Cup I met the Bish at the country club. We arrived there between nine and ten in the morning, and the first man we saw was Mr. Henry Peacock. He was out on the eighteenth fairway practising approach shots, and the putting green was speckled with balls.

"Hello!" said the Bish. "Look who's here! Practising too. You don't suppose that old chump is going to try to make a golfer of himself, this late along?"

I said that it appeared that way.

"One-club practise is all right for a beginner," said the Bish, "because he hasn't any bad habits to overcome, but this poor nut didn't take up the game till he was forty, and when he learned it he learned it all wrong. He can practise till he's black in the face and it won't do him any good. Don't you think we'd better page Doc Osler and have him put out of his misery?"

It was then that I told the Bish about Henry's desire to break into Class A, and he whistled.

"It got him quick, didn't it?" said he. "Well, there's no fool like an old fool."

Half an hour later this was made quite plain to us. Henry came into the clubhouse to get a drink of water. Now I did not know him very well, and the Bish had only a nodding acquaintance with him, but he greeted us as long-lost brothers. I did not understand his cordiality at first, but the reason for it was soon apparent. Henry wanted to know whether we had a match up for the afternoon.

"Sorry," lied the Bish; "we're already hooked up with a foursome."

Henry said he was sorry too; and moreover he looked it.

"I was thinking I might get in with you," said he. "What I need is the—er—opportunity to study better players—er—get some real competition. Somebody that will make me do my best all the time. Don't you think that will help my game?"

"Doubtless," said the Bish in his deepest tone; "but at the same time you shouldn't get too far out of your class. There is a difference between being spurred on by competition and being discouraged by it."

"I shot an eighty-two last Saturday," said Henry quickly.

"So I hear. So I hear. And how many brassy shots did you hole out?"

"Not one. It—it wasn't luck. It was good steady play."

"He admits it," murmured the Bish, but Henry didn't even hear him.

"Good steady play," he repeated. "What a man does once he can do again. Eighty-two. Six strokes above the par of the course. My net was twelve strokes below it—due, of course, to a ridiculously high handicap: I—I intend to have that altered. Eighty-two is Class-A golf."

"Or an accident," said the Bish rather coldly.

"Steady golf is never an accident," argued Henry. "I have thought it all out and come to the conclusion that what I need now is keener competition—er—better men to play with; and"—this with a trace of stubbornness in his tone—"I mean to find them."

The Bish kicked my foot under the table.

"That's all very well," said he, "but—how about the Old Guard?"

The wretched renegade squirmed in his chair.

"That," said he, "will adjust itself later."

"You mean that you'll break away?"

"I didn't say so, did I?"

"No, but you've been talking about keener competition."

Henry was not pleased with the turn the conversation had taken. He rose to go.

"Woodson and Totten and Miller are fine fellows," said he. "Personally I hold them in the highest esteem, but you must admit that they are poor golfers. Not one of them ever shot an

eighty-five. I—I have my own game to consider. . . . You're quite sure you won't have a vacancy this afternoon?"

"Oh, quite," said the Bish, and Henry toddled back to his practise. It was well that he left us, for the Bish was on the point of an explosion.

"Well!" said he. "The conceited, ungrateful old scoundrel! Got his own game to consider—did you hear that? Just one fair-to-middling score in his whole worthless life, and now he's too swelled up to associate with the fellows who have played with him all these years, stood for his little meannesses, covered up his faults and overlooked his shortcomings! Keener competition, eh? Pah! Would you play with him?"

"Not on a bet!" said I.

On the following Wednesday the Old Guard counted noses and found itself short the star member. Lacking the courage or the decency to inform his friends of his change of programme, Peacock took the line of least resistance and elected to escape them by a late arrival. Sam Totten made several flying trips into the locker room in search of his partner, but he gave up at last, and at one-thirty the Old Guard drove off, a threesome.

At one-thirty-two Henry sneaked into the clubhouse and announced that he was without a match. The news did not create any great furore. All the Class-A foursomes were made

up, and, to make matters worse, the Bish had been doing a little quiet but effective missionary work. Henry's advances brought him smack up against a stone wall of polite but definite refusal. The cup winner was left out in the cold.

He finally picked up Uncle George Sawyer, it being a matter of Uncle George or nobody. Uncle George is a twenty-four-handicap man, but only when he is at the very top of his game, and he is deaf as a post, left handed and a confirmed slicer. In addition to these misfortunes Uncle George is blessed with the disposition of a dyspeptic wildcat, and I imagine that Mr. Peacock did not have a pleasant afternoon. The Old Guard pounced on him when he came into the lounging room at five o'clock.

"Hey! Why didn't you say that you'd be late?" demanded Sam Totten. "We'd have waited for you."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Henry—and he looked like a sheep-killing dog surprised with the wool in his teeth—"I'll tell you. The fact of the matter is I—I didn't know just how late I was going to be, and I didn't think it would be fair to you——"

"Apology's accepted," said Jumbo, "but don't let it happen again. And you went and picked on poor old Sawyer too. You—a cup winner—picking on a cripple like that! Henry, where do you expect to go when you die? Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"We've got it all fixed up to play at San Gabriel next Saturday," put in Peter Miller. "You'll go, of course?"

"I'll ring up and let you know," said Henry, and slipped away to the shower room.

I do not know what lies he told over the telephone or how he managed to squirm out of the San Gabriel trip, but I do know that he turned up at the country club at eleven o'clock on Saturday morning and spent two hours panhandling everybody in sight for a match. The keen competition fought very shy of Mr. Peacock, thanks to the Bish and his whispering campaign. Everybody was scrupulously polite to him—some even expressed regret—but nobody seemed to need a fourth man.

"They're just as glad to see him as if he had smallpox," grinned the Bish. "Well, I've got a heart that beats for my fellow man. I'd hate to see Peacock left without any kind of a match. Old Sawyer is asleep on the front porch. I'll go and tell him that Peacock is here looking for him."

It has been years since any one sought Uncle George's company, and the old chap was delighted, but if Henry was pleased he managed to conceal his happiness. I learned later that their twosome wound up in a jawing match on the sixteenth green, in which Uncle George had all the better of it because he couldn't hear any of the things that Henry called him. They came to grief over a question of the rules; and

Waddles, when appealed to, decided that they were both wrong—and a couple of fussy old hens, to boot.

"Just what I told him!" mumbled Uncle George, who hadn't heard a word that Waddles said. "The ball nearest the hole——"

"No such thing!" interrupted Henry, and they went away still squabbling. Waddles shook his head.

"He's a fine twelve-handicap man!" said he with scorn. "Doesn't even know the rules of the game!"

"Twelve!" said I. "You don't mean——"

"Yes, I cut him to twelve. Ever since he won that cup he's been hounding me—by letter, by telephone and by word of mouth. He's like Tom Sawyer's cat and the pain killer. He kept asking for it, and now he's got it. He thinks a low handicap will make him play better—stubborn old fool!"

"And that's not all," said the Bish. "He's left the Old Guard, flat."

"No!"

"He has, I tell you."

"I don't believe it," said Waddles. "He may be all kinds of a chump, but he wouldn't do that."

The Old Guard didn't believe it either. It must have been all of three weeks before Totten and Woodson and Miller realised that Peacock was a deserter, that he was deliberately avoiding them. At first they accepted his lame ex-

cuses at face value, and when doubt began to creep in they said the thing couldn't be possible. One day they waited for him and brought matters to a showdown. Henry wriggled and twisted and squirmed, and finally blurted out that he had made other arrangements. That settled it, of course; and then instead of being angry or disgusted with Henry they seemed to pity him, and from the beginning to the end I am quite certain that not one of them ever took the renegade to task for his conduct. Worse than everything else they actually missed him. It was Frank Woodson, acting as spokesman for the others, who explained the situation to me.

"Oh, about Henry? Well, it's this way: We've all got our little peculiarities—Lord knows I've a few of my own. I never would have thought this could happen, but it just goes to show how a man gets a notion crossways in his head and jams up the machinery. Henry is all right at heart. His head is a little out of line at present, but his heart is O. K. You see, he won that cup and it gave him a wrong idea. He really thinks that under certain conditions he can play back to that eighty-two. I know he can't. We all know he can't; but let him go ahead and try it. He'll get over this little spell and be a good dog again."

The Bish, who was present, suggested that the Old Guard should elect a new member and forget the deserter.

"No-o," said Frank thoughtfully; "that

wouldn't be right. We've talked it over, the three of us, and we'll keep his place open for him. Confound it, man! You don't realise that we've been playing together for more than fifteen years! We understand each other, and we used to have more fun than anybody, just dubbing round the course. The game doesn't seem quite the same, with Henry out of it; and I don't think he's having a very good time, hanging on the fringe of Class A and trying to butt in where he isn't wanted. No; he'll come back pretty soon, and everything will be just the same again. We've all got our little peculiarities, Bish. You've got some. I've got some. The best thing is to be charitable and overlook as much as you can, hoping that folks will treat you the same way."

"And that," said Bish after Jumbo had gone away, "proves the statement that a friend is 'a fellow who knows all about you and still stands for you.' How long do you suppose they'll have to wait before that old imbecile regains his senses?"

They waited for at least five months, during which time H. Peacock, Esquire, enrolled himself as the prize pest of the golfing world. The Class-B men, resenting his treatment of the Old Guard, were determined not to let him break into one of their foursomes, and the Class-A men wouldn't have him at any price. The game of pussy-wants-a-corner is all right for children, but Henry, playing it alone, did not seem to find

it entertaining. He picked up a stranger now and then, but it wasn't the season for visitors, and even Uncle George Sawyer shied when he saw Henry coming. The stubbornness which led him to insist that his handicap be cut would not permit him to hoist the white flag and return to the fold, and altogether he had a wretched time of it—almost as bad a time as he deserved. Left to himself he became every known variety of a golfing nut. He saved his score cards, entering them on some sort of a comparative chart which he kept in his locker—one of those see-it-at-a-glance things. He took lessons of the poor professional; he bought new clubs and discovered that they were not as good as his old ones; he experimented with every ball on the market; and his game was neither better nor worse than it was before the Hemmingway Cup poured its poison into the shrivelled receptacle which passed for Henry Peacock's soul.

IV

One week ago last Saturday, Sam Totten staged his annual show. Totten Day is ringed with red on all calendars belonging to Class-B golfers. It is the day when men win cups who never won cups before. All Class-A men are barred; it is strictly a Class-B party. Those with handicaps from twelve to twenty-four are eligible, and there are cups for all sorts of things—the best gross, the best first nine, the

best second nine, the best score with one hole out, the best score with two holes out, and so on. Sam always buys the big cup himself—the one for the best gross score—and he sandbags his friends into contributing at least a dozen smaller trophies. The big cup is placed on exhibition before play begins, but the others, as well as the conditions of award, remain under cover, thus introducing the element of the unexpected. The conditions are made known as the cups are awarded and the ceremony of presentation is worth going a long way to see and a longer way to hear.

On Totten Day three of us were looking for a fourth man, and we encountered Henry Peacock, in his chronic state of loneliness. The Bish is sometimes a very secretive person, but he might have spared my feelings by giving me a hint of his intentions. Henry advanced on us, expecting nothing, hoping for nothing, but convinced that there was no harm in the asking. He used the threadbare formula:

"Any vacancy this afternoon, gentlemen?"

"Why, yes!" said the Bish. "Yes, we're one man short. Want to go round with us?"

Did he! Would a starving newsboy go to a turkey dinner? Henry fell all over himself in his eagerness to accept that invitation. Any time would suit him—just let him get a sandwich and a glass of milk and he would be at our service. As for the making of the match, the pairing of the players, he would leave that to

the Bish. He, Henry, was a twelve-handicap man; and he might shoot to it, and again he might not. Yes, anything would suit him—and he scuttled away toward the dining-room.

I took the Bish into a corner and spoke harshly to him. He listened without so much as a twitch of his long solemn upper lip.

"All done?" said he when I had finished. "Very well! Listen to me. I took him in with us because this is Totten Day."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Everything. As a Class-B man he's eligible to play for those cups. If he tears up his card or picks up his ball he'll disqualify himself. I want to make sure that he plays every hole out, sinks all his putts and has his card turned in."

"But you don't want that old stiff to win a cup, do you?"

"I do," said the Bish. "Not only that, but I'm going to help him win it. That old boy hasn't been treated right. 'Man's inhumanity to man' is a frightful thing if carried to extremes. And anyway, what are you kicking about? You don't have to play with him. I'll take him as my partner, and you can have Dale."

When our foursome appeared on the first tee there was quite a ripple of subdued excitement. The news that Henry Peacock had finally broken into Class-A company was sufficient to empty the lounging room. Totten, Miller and Woodson were present, but not in their golfing clothes.

Sam was acting as field marshal, assisted by Jumbo and Pete. It was Woodson who came forward and patted Henry on the back.

"Show 'em what you can do, old boy!" said he. "Go out and get another eighty-two!"

"I'll bring him home in front," said the Bish. "Of course"—here he addressed Henry—"you won't mind my giving you a pointer or two as we go along. We've got a tough match here and we want to win it if we can."

"I'll be only too happy," chirped Henry, all in a flutter. "I need pointers. Anything you can tell me will be appreciated."

"That's the way to talk!" said the Bish, slapping him on the back and almost knocking him down. "The only golfer who'll never amount to anything is the one who can't be told when he makes a mistake!"

Well, away we went, Dale and I driving first. Then the Bish sent one of his justly celebrated tee shots screaming up the course and made room for Henry. Whether it was the keen competition or the evident interest shown by the spectators or the fact that the Bish insisted that Henry change his stance I cannot say, but the old man nearly missed the ball entirely, topping it into the bunker.

"Don't let a little thing like that worry you," said the Bish, taking Henry's arm. "I'll tell you how to play the next shot."

Arriving at the bunker Henry armed himself with his niblick.

"What are you going to do with that blunderbuss?" asked the Bish. "Can't you play your jigger at all?"

"My jigger!" exclaimed Henry. "But—it's a niblick shot, isn't it?"

"That's what most people would tell you, but in this case, with a good lie and a lot of distance to make up, I'd take the jigger and pick it up clean. If you hit it right you'll get a long ball."

Now Chick Evans or Ouimet might play a jigger in a bunker and get away with it once in a while, but to recommend that very tricky iron to a dub like Henry Peacock was nothing short of a misdemeanour. Acting under instructions he swung as hard as he could, but the narrow blade hit the sand four inches behind the ball and buried it completely.

"Oh, tough luck!" said the Bish. "Now for a little high-class excavating. Scoop her out with the niblick."

Henry scooped three times, at last popping the ball over the grassy wall. The Bish did not seem in the least discouraged.

"Now your wood," said he.

"But I play a cleek better."

"Nonsense! Take a good hard poke at it with the brassy!"

And poke it he did—a nasty slice into rough grass.

"I could have kept it straight with an iron," said Henry reproachfully.

"Well, of course," said the Bish, "if you don't want me to advise you——"

"But I do!" Henry hastened to assure him. "Oh, I do! You can't imagine how much I appreciate your correcting my mistakes!"

"Spoken like a sportsman," said the Bish, and followed at Henry's heels. By acting upon all the advice given him Henry managed to achieve that first hole in eleven strokes. He said he hoped that we would believe he could do better than that.

"Sure you can!" said the Bish with enthusiasm. "One thing about you, Peacock, you're willing to learn, and when a man is willing to learn there is always hope for him. Never let one bad hole get your nanny."

"Eleven!" murmured Henry. "No chance for me to win that big cup now."

"Aw, what's one cup, more or less?" demanded the Bish. "You'll get something today worth more than any cup. You'll get keen competition—and advice."

Indeed that was the truth. The competition was keen enough, and the advice poured forth in a steady stream. The Bish never left Henry alone with his ball for an instant. He was not allowed to think for himself, nor was he allowed to choose the clubs with which to execute his shots. If he wished to use a mashie the Bish would insist on the midiron. If he pulled the midiron from his bag the jigger would be placed in nomination. The climax came when

the Bish gravely explained that all putter shots should be played with a slight hook, "for the sake of the extra run." That was when I nearly swallowed my chewing gum.

"He's steering him all wrong," whispered Dale. "What's the idea?"

I suggested that he ask the Bish that question; but we got nothing out of that remarkable man but a cool, impersonal stare; and for the first time since I have known him the Bish kept a careful record of the scores. As a general thing he carries the figures in his head—and when you find a man who does that you have found a golfer. Henry's score would have been a great memory test. It ran to eights, nines and double figures, and on the long hole, when he topped his drive into the bottom of the ravine and played seven strokes in a tangle of sycamore roots he amassed the astonishing total of fifteen. From time to time he bleated plaintively, but the Bish, sticking closer than a brother, advised him to put all thought of his score out of his head and concentrate on his shots. Henry might have been able to do this if he had been left alone, but with a human phonograph at his elbow he had no chance to concentrate on anything. He finished in a blaze of glory, taking nine on the last hole, and the Bish slapped him violently between the shoulder blades.

"You'll be all right, Peacock, if you just remember what I've told you. The fundamentals

of your game are sound enough, but you've a tendency to underclub yourself. You must curb that. Never be afraid of getting too much distance."

"I—I'm awfully obliged to you," said Henry. "I'm obliged to all you gentlemen. I hope to have the pleasure of playing with you again soon—er—quite soon. I'm here nearly every afternoon. And anything you can tell me——"

Henry continued to babble and the Bish drew me aside.

"Hold him in the lounging room for a while. Don't let him get away. Talk to him about his game—anything. Buy him soft drinks, but keep him there!"

Immediately thereafter the Bish excused himself, and I heard him demanding to know where he might come by a shingle nail.

The Totten Day cups were presented in the lounging room with the usual ceremonies. Sam made the speeches and Jumbo acted as sergeant-at-arms, escorting the winners to the table at the end of the room. By selecting an obscure corner I had been able to detain Henry for a time, but when the jollification began he showed signs of nervousness. He spoke of needing a shower and was twice on the point of departure when my good fairy prompted me to mention the winning of the Hemmingway Cup. Immediately he launched into an elaborate description of that famous victory, stroke by

stroke, with distances, direction and choice of clubs set forth in proper order. He was somewhere on the seventh hole when Totten made his last speech.

"So I thought it all over, and I decided it was too far for the mashie and not quite far enough for the——"

There was a loud, booming noise at the other end of the room. Over the sea of heads I caught sight of the Bish mounting a table. He had a large green felt bag under his arm.

"Gentlemen!" he shouted. "Gentlemen—if you are gentlemen!—I crave your indulgence for a moment! A moment, I beg of you! I have here an added trophy—a trophy which I may say is unique in golfing history!"

He paused, and there was a faint patter of applause, followed by cries of "Go to it, Bish!" I glanced at Sam Totten, and the surprised expression on his face told me that this part of the programme was not of his making.

"All the cups presented to-day," continued the Bish, "have been awarded for a best score of some sort. I believe you will agree with me that this is manifestly one-sided and unfair."

"Hear! Hear!" cried a voice.

"Throw that twenty-four-handicap man out!" said the Bish. "Now the cup which I hold in my hands is a cup for the highest gross score ever made by a twelve-handicap man in the United States of America."

Henry Peacock jumped as if his name had

been called. If I had not laid my hand on his arm he would have bolted for the door.

"I take great pleasure, gentlemen," said the Bish after the uproar had subsided, "in presenting this unique trophy to one who now has a double distinction. He is the holder of two records—one for the lowest net score on record, the other for the highest gross. Mr. Henry Peacock shot the course to-day in exactly one hundred and sixty-seven strokes. . . . Bring the gentleman forward, please!"

There was a great burst of laughter and applause, and under cover of the confusion Henry tried to escape. A dozen laughing members surrounded him, and he surrendered, sputtering incoherently. He was escorted to the table, and the double wall of cheering humanity closed in behind him and surged forward. I caught a glimpse of his face as the Bish bent over and placed the green bag in his hands. It was very red, and his lower lip was trembling with rage.

"Open it up! Come on, let's see it!"

Mr. Peacock cast one despairing glance to left and right and plunged his hand into the bag. I do not know what he expected to find there, but it was a cup, sure enough—a fine, large pewter cup, cast in feeble imitation of the genuine article and worth perhaps seventy-five cents. And on the side of this cup rudely engraved with a shingle nail, was the record of Mr. Peacock's activities for the afternoon, in gross and detail, as follows:

HOLES	PAR	PEACOCK
1	4	11
2	4	9
3	4	8
4	5	8
5	3	7
6	6	15
7	5	9
8	4	8
9	4	12
10	5	12
11	3	7
12	4	8
13	4	9
14	3	7
15	4	8
16	4	9
17	5	11
18	5	9
Total.....	76	167

As Henry gazed at this work of art a shout came from the back of the room. Waddles had come to life.

"Winner buys, Henry! Winner always buys! It's a rule of the club!"

"The club be damned!" cried Henry Peacock as he fought his way to the door.

"Bish," said Frank Woodson, "that was a rotten trick to play on anybody. You shouldn't have done it."

"A rotten case," replied the Bish, "requires a rotten remedy. It's kill or cure; even money and take your pick."

As it turned out it was a cure.

Henry Peacock is once more a member of the Old Guard, in good standing and entitled to all

privileges. Totten, Woodson and Miller received him with open arms, and they actually treat the old reprobate as if nothing had happened. I believe it will be a long time before he reminds them that he once shot an eighty-two, and a longer time before he breaks a ninety.

A CURE FOR LUMBAGO

I

COLONEL JIMMY threatens to resign from the club. He says it was sharp practice. Archie MacBride says it wasn't half as sharp as the lumbago trick which the Colonel worked on him as well as several of the other young members. Colonel Jimmy Norman is one of the charter members of our golf club. He is about as old as Methuselah and he looks it. That is what fools people. It doesn't fool the handicap committee, though. They've got the Colonel down to 8 now and he hasn't entered a club competition since for fear they'll cut him to 6. Respect for age is a fine thing, I admit, but anybody who can step out and tear off 79's and 80's on the Meadowmead course—72 par and a tough 72 at that—isn't entitled to much the best of it because he can remember the Civil War and cast his first vote for Tilden.

Mind you, I don't say that Colonel Jimmy shoots 79's every day, but he shoots 'em when

he needs 79's to win, and that's the mark of a real golfer. And bet? The old pirate will bet anything from a repainted golf ball to a government bond. He has never been known to take his clubs out of the locker without a gamble of some sort. The new members pay all the expenses of Colonel Jimmy's golfing, as well as the upkeep of his limousine—the old members are shy of him—and the way he can nurse a victim along for months without letting him win a single bet is nothing short of miraculous. I ought to know, for I am one of Colonel Jimmy's graduates, and, while I never beat him in my life, he always left me with the impression that I would surely rook him the next time—if I had any luck. Somehow I never had the luck.

Colonel Jimmy has the gentle art of coin separation down to an exact science. Perhaps this is because he made his money in Wall Street and applies Wall Street methods to his golf. After every match he waits around until he collects. He always apologises for taking the money and says that he hopes you'll be on your game the next time.

The Colonel is a shrewd judge of how far he can go in shearing a lamb, and when he sees signs that the victim is getting bare in spots and is about ready to stop betting with him, he cleans up all the spare fleece with the lumbago trick. I'll never forget how he worked it on me. I had been betting him five and ten dollars a match and winning nothing but sympathy and

advice and I was about ready to quit the Colonel as a poor investment.

The next time I went out to the club I found Colonel Jimmy sitting on the porch in the sun and I heard him groan even before I saw him. Naturally I asked what was the matter.

"Oh, it's this cursed lumbago again! I must have caught cold after my shower the other night and—ouch!—just when I'd been looking forward to a nice little game this afternoon, too! It's a real pleasure to play with a young man like you who—ouch! O-o-o!"

After a while he began to wonder whether light exercise would do him any good. I thought it might and he let me persuade him. If I would give him my arm as far as his locker—ouch!

All the time he was dressing he grunted and groaned and rubbed his back and cursed the lumbago bitterly. He said it was the one thing the devil didn't try on Job because it would have fetched him if he had. He worried some because he would have to drive with an iron, not being able to take a full swing with a wooden club. Then when he had me all ribbed up properly, he dropped a hint where I couldn't help but stumble over it.

"You have always named the bet," said Colonel Jimmy. "Don't take advantage of my condition to raise it beyond reason."

Up to that time the idea of making a bet with a cripple hadn't occurred to me. It wouldn't have seemed fair. I got to thinking about the

fives and the tens that the old rascal had taken away from me when the advantage was all on his side and—

"I suppose I shouldn't expect mercy," said Colonel Jimmy, fitting his remarks to my thought like a mind reader. "I have been quite fortunate in winning from you, William, when you were not playing your best. This seems an excellent opportunity for you to take revenge. This cursed lumbago——"

The match was finally made at five dollars a hole, and if I hadn't been ashamed of taking advantage of a cripple I would have said ten.

Colonel Jimmy whined a little and said that in his condition it was almost a shame for me to raise the bet to five dollars a hole and that he couldn't possibly allow me any more than five strokes where before he had been giving me eight and ten. He said he probably wouldn't get any distance off the tees on account of not being able to take a full swing, and I agreed on the basis of five strokes, one each on the five longest holes.

I went out to the professional's shop to buy some new balls. David Cameron is a good club maker, but a disappointing conversationalist. He says just so much, and then he stops and rubs his left ear. I told David that I had caught Colonel Jimmy out of line at last and would bring him home at least six or seven down.

"Ay," said David. "He'll be havin' one of

his attacks of the lumba-ago again, I'm think-in'. Ye've raised the bet?"

I admitted that the bet had been pressed a little. "Ye're not gettin' as many str-rokes as usual?"

I explained about the Colonel's not being able to take a full swing with his wooden clubs.

"Ay," said David, beginning to polish his left ear.

"I wish you'd tell me what you think," said I.

"I'm thinkin'," said David, "that ye'll not have noticed that the climate hereabouts is varra benefeecial to certain for-rms o' disease. I've known it to cure the worst case o' lumba-ago between the clubhouse an' the fir-rst tee. The day o' meeracles is not past by ony means," concluded David, rubbing his ear hard.

I suspected then that I had a bad bet. I was sure of it when I saw Colonel Jimmy pulling his driver out of the bag on the first tee.

"I thought you said you'd have to drive with an iron." I reminded him of it anyway.

"I might as well try the wood," said Colonel Jimmy. "I'll have to shorten up my swing some and I suppose I'll top the ball."

He groaned and he grunted when he took his practice swing, and said that he was really afraid he'd have to call the bet off, but when he hit the ball he followed through like a six-teen-year-old, and it went sailing down the

middle of the course, a good 200 yards—which is as far as Colonel Jimmy ever drives.

"Well, I'll declare!" he crowed. "Look at that ball go! I had no idea I could do it! And with this lumbago too!"

There's no use in prolonging the agony with a detailed account of the match. The old shark was out for the fag end of the fleece crop so far as I was concerned, and he surely gave me a close clip. He made a 79 that day and I had to hand him my check for forty dollars. It might not have been so much, only on every tee the Colonel whined about his lumbago and got me in such a state of mind that I couldn't keep my eye on the ball to save my life

When we got back to the clubhouse, David Cameron was sitting in the door of his shop, rubbing his left ear thoughtfully. He knew it wouldn't have been safe for him to ask about the match. Colonel Jimmy, confound him, blatted right along, apologising to me for playing "better than he knew how" and all that sort of rot. He said he hoped we could have another match soon, and perhaps I was a little crusty with him. At any rate he was satisfied that my forty-dollar check was the last contribution he would ever get from me, and he took up with Archie MacBride, who had just joined the club and was learning the game.

Archie hails from out West somewhere and he has the Eastern agency for a lot of stuff manufactured in Chicago. In the beginning he

didn't know any of the younger members at Meadowmead and that made it easy for the Colonel to take him under his wing. The old rascal has rather a pleasant manner—in the clubhouse at least—and he talked Chicago to Archie—what a wonderful city it is and all that stuff. He talked the same way to me about Cincinnati.

I watched the shearing proceed to the lumbago stage, but I didn't interfere. In the first place, it wasn't any of my business. In the second, I hadn't been introduced to MacBride. And, besides, I had a sort of curiosity to know how he would act when he was stung. He looked more like a goat than a lamb to me.

One day I was sitting on the porch and MacBride came out of the locker room and sat down beside me. Colonel Jimmy was over on the extra green, practicing sidehill putts. Somehow we drifted into conversation.

"Did you ever play with that old fellow over there?" said he.

"A few times."

"Ever beat him?"

"No-o. Nor anybody else. His methods are —well, peculiar."

"Darned peculiar! I don't know but that the grand jury ought to investigate 'em. If you shoot 110 at him, he's just good enough to win. If you make a 90, he's still good enough to win. He's always good enough to win. The

other day I came out here and found him all doubled up with——"

"Lumbago, wasn't it?"

MacBride held out his hand immediately.

"Both members of the same lodge!" said he. "I feel better now. He nicked me for an even hundred. What did he get you for?"

Nothing cements a friendship like a common grievance. We had both been rooked by the lumbago trick and we fell to discussing the Colonel and his petty larceny system of picking on the new members.

"Far be it that I should squeal," said Archie. "I hope I'm a good loser as far as the money goes, but I hate to be bunkoed. I handed over one hundred big iron dollars to that hoary old pirate—and I smiled when I did it. It hurt me worse to smile than it did to part with the frogskins, but I wanted the Colonel to think that I didn't suspect him. I want him to regard me as a soft proposition and an easy mark because some day I am going to leave a chunk of bait lying around where that old coyote can see it. If he gobbles it—good night. Yes, sir, I'm going to slip one over on him that he'll remember even when they begin giving him the oxygen."

"He'll never be trimmed on a golf course," said I.

"He'll never be trimmed anywhere else. It's the only game he plays. If he sticks around this club, I'll introduce him to the Chicago method of taking the bristles off a hog. I'm

not sure, but I think it's done with a hoe."

"It can't be done with a set of golf clubs," said I.

"Don't be too sure of that. By the way, my name's MacBride. What's yours? . . . If you don't mind, I'll call you Bill for short. We will now visit the nineteenth tee and pour a libation on the altar of friendship. We will drink success to the Chicago method of shearing a hog. Simple, effective, and oh, so painful!"

II

Colonel Jimmy picked up a new pupil after Archie quit him and Archie paired off with me. We played two or three times a week and often ran into the Colonel on the porch or in the locker room. The old reprobate was always cordial in his cat-and-canary way—infernally cordial. I couldn't resist the temptation to inquire after his lumbago occasionally, but it was next to impossible to hurt his feelings. The old fellow's hide was bullet proof and even the broadest sort of hint was lost on him. Archie was more tactful. He used to joke the Colonel about a return match, but he was never able to fix a date. The Colonel was busy anyway. His latest victim was a chinless youth from Poughkeepsie with money to burn and no fear of matches.

One afternoon Archie brought a friend out to the club with him—an immense big chap with

hands and feet like hams. Everything about him was beyond the limit. He was too beefy to begin with, though I suppose that wasn't his fault. He wore a red tie and a yellow vest. He talked too much and too loud. Archie introduced him to me as Mr. Small of Chicago.

"Small but not little!" said Small. "Haw!"

"Mr. Small is an old friend of mine," said Archie. "He is taking a short vacation and I am putting him up at the club for a week or ten days. He doesn't look it, but his doctor says he needs exercise."

"Yeh," said Small, "and while I'm resting I think I'll learn this fool game of golf. Think of a big fellow like me, whaling a poor little pill all over the country! I suppose all there is to it is to hit the blamed thing."

Colonel Jimmy was sitting over by the reading table and I saw him prick up his ears at this remark. He always manages to scrape an acquaintance with all the beginners.

Small went booming along.

"I can remember," said he, "when people who played golf were supposed to be a little queer upstairs. Cow-pasture pool, we used to call it. It's a good deal like shinny-on-your-own-side, ain't it?"

Archie took him out to David to get him outfitted with clubs and things, left Small in the shop, and came back to explain matters to me.

"You mustn't mind Small's manner," said he. "He's really one of the best fellows in the

world, but he's—well, a trifle crude in spots. He's never had time to acquire a polish; he's been too busy making money."

"Excuse me"—Colonel Jimmy had been listening—"but is he in any way related to the Caspar Smalls of Chicago and Denver?"

"Not that I know of, Colonel," said Archie.

"You spoke of money," said I. "Has he so much of it, then?"

"Barrels, my dear boy, barrels. Crude oil is his line at present. And only thirty-five years of age too. He's a self-made man, Small is."

I couldn't think of anything to say except that he must have had a deuce of a lot of raw material to start with—and if I put the accent on the raw it was unintentional.

"Well," said Archie, "his heart is in the right place anyway."

When you can't think of anything else to say for a man, you can always say that his heart is in the right place. It sounds well, but it doesn't mean anything. Archie proposed that we should let Small go around with us that afternoon. I didn't like the idea, but, of course, I kept mum; the man was Archie's guest.

Small got in bad on the first tee. I knew he would when I saw who was ahead of us—Colonel Jimmy and the chinless boy. Like most elderly mechanical golfers, the Colonel is a stickler for the etiquette of the game—absolute silence and all that sort of thing.

Archie introduced Small to the Colonel and

the Colonel introduced us to the chinless boy, who said he was charmed, stepped up on the tee and whacked his ball into the rough.

While the Colonel was teeing up, Small kept moving around and talking in that megaphone voice of his. Colonel Jimmy looked at him rather eloquently a couple of times and finally Small hushed up. The Colonel took his stance, tramped around awhile to get a firm footing, addressed the ball three times, and drew his club back for the swing. Just as it started downward, Small sneezed—one of those sneezes with an Indian war whoop on the end of it—"Aa-chew!" Naturally Colonel Jimmy jumped, took his eye off the ball and topped it into the long grass in front of the tee.

"Take it over," said the chinless boy, who was a sport if nothing else.

"I certainly intend to!" snapped the Colonel, glaring at Small. "You—you spoiled my swing, sir!"

"Quit your kidding, Colonel!" said Small. "How could I spoil your swing?"

"You sneezed behind me!"

Small laughed at the top of his voice. "Haw! Haw! That's rich! Why, I've seen Heinie Zimmerman hit a baseball a mile with thirty thousand people yelling their heads off at him!"

"Yes," said Archie, "but that was baseball. This is golf. There's a difference."

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, "when you

are through with your discussion, I would really like to drive."

III

I played with Small all the afternoon without yielding to an impulse to slay him with a niblick, which speaks volumes for my good disposition. It was a harrowing experience. Small proceeded on the usual theory of the beginner, which is to hit the ball as hard as possible and trust to luck. The most I can say for his day's play is that I never expect to see golf balls hit any harder. His wooden club shots hooked and sliced into the woods on either side of the course—he bought a dozen balls to begin with and was borrowing from us at the finish—he dug up great patches of turf on the fair greens, he nearly destroyed three bunkers and after every shot he yelled like a Comanche.

We caught up with Colonel Jimmy at the eighteenth tee. The Colonel was in a better humour and was offering to give the chinless boy a stroke and play him double or quits on the last hole—sure proof that he had him badly licked. The chinless boy took the bet.

"Now, there's some sense to that!" said Small. "I never could play any game for fun. Make it worth while, that's what I say! Archie, I'll bet you a hundred that I beat you this hole!"

Colonel Jimmy was picking up a handful of

sand from a tee. He dropped it and began to clean his ball.

"I'd be ashamed to take the money," said Archie. "You wouldn't have a chance."

"You mean you're afraid to take one. Be a sport!"

"I *am* a sport. That's why I won't bet on a cinch."

They had quite a jawing match and finally Archie said that he would bet Small ten dollars.

"Huh!" said Small. "I wouldn't exert myself for a measly ten spot. Make it twenty-five!"

"Well, if you insist," said Archie, "and I'll give you two strokes."

"You'll give me nothing!" said Small. "What do you think I am? I'll play you even and lick you." And he was so nasty about it that Archie had to agree.

The Colonel turned around after he played his second shot to watch us drive. Small took a tremendous swing and hooked the ball over the fence and out of bounds. He borrowed another and sliced that one into the woods. When he finally sunk his putt—he took 17 for the hole and that wasn't counting the ones he missed—he dug up a wallet stuffed with currency and insisted on paying Archie on the spot.

"I don't feel right about taking this," said Archie.

"You won it, didn't you?" said Small. "If you had lost, would you have paid?"

"Ye-es," said Archie, "but——"

"But nothing! Take it and shut up!"

Colonel Jimmy, waiting on the porch, was an interested witness. In less than five minutes by the watch the chinless boy was sitting over in a corner, alone with a lemonade, and the Colonel had Small by the buttonhole, talking Chicago to him. I have always claimed that Colonel Jimmy has all the instincts of a wolf, but perhaps it is only his Wall Street training that makes him so keen when a lamb is in sight.

"Yes, Chicago is a live town all right," said Small, "but about this golf proposition, now: I'm getting the hang of the thing, Colonel. If I didn't lose so many balls——"

"You have a fine, natural swing," said the Colonel in a tone soft as corn silk. "A trifle less power, my friend, and you will get better direction."

Well, it was too much for me. I didn't care much for Small, but I hated to see him walk into ambush with his eyes open. I left him and the Colonel hobnobbing over their highballs, and went into the locker room, where I found Archie.

"Look here!" I said. "That old pirate is after your friend. Colonel Jimmy heard Small make that fool bet on the eighteenth tee, and you know what a leech he is when soft money is in sight. He's after him."

"So soon?" said Archie. "Quick work."

"Well, don't you think Small ought to be warned?"

Archie laughed.

"Warned about what?"

"Don't be more of an ass than usual, Archie. The Colonel has got him out there, telling him about Chicago. You know what that means, and a fellow that bets as recklessly as Small does——"

"I can't do anything," said Archie. "Small is of age."

"But you wouldn't let him go up against a cinch?"

"Small has been up against cinches all his life. That's how he made his money."

"That's how he'll lose it, too. I'll put a flea in his ear if you don't."

"Bill," said Archie, "I've made it a rule never to open my mouth in any gambling game unless my money was on the table. Understand? Then, whatever happens, there's no comeback at me. Think it over."

"But the man is your guest!"

"Exactly. He's my guest. If you see fit to warn him——" Archie shrugged his shoulders.

Well, what could I say after that? I took my shower bath and dressed. Then I went into the lounging room. Small was, if anything, a trifle noisier than ever.

"Any game that I can bet on is the game for

me," said he, "but I hate a piker. Don't you hate a piker, Colonel?"

"A man," said Colonel Jimmy, "should never bet more than he can afford to lose—cheerfully."

"Cheerfully. That's the ticket! You're a sport, Colonel. I can see it in your eye. You don't holler when you lose. Now, Colonel, what would you consider a good stiff bet, eh? How high would you go? This kindergarten business wouldn't appeal to either one of us, would it? You wait till I go around this course a few times and I'll make you a *real* bet—one that will be worth playing for, eh? What's the most you ever played for, Colonel?" It was like casting pearls before swine and he wasn't my guest, but I did what I could for him.

"Mr. Small," said I, "if you're going in to town there's room in my car for you."

"Thanks. I'm stopping here at the club. Archie fixed me up with a room. The Colonel is going to stay and have dinner with me, ain't you, Colonel? Surest thing you know! He's met a lot of friends of mine out West. Small world, ain't it? Going, eh? Well, behave yourself! . . . Now then, Colonel, gimme a few more days of this cow-pasture pool and I'll show you what a real bet looks like!"

I left the wolf and the lamb together, and I don't mind admitting that I liked one as well as the other.

Business took me out of town for ten days,

and when I returned home I was told that Archie had been telephoning me all the morning. I rang him at his office.

"Oh, hello, Bill! You're back just in time for the big show. . . . Eh? Oh, Colonel Jimmy is due for another attack of lumbago this afternoon. . . . Small telephoned me last night that he was complaining a little. . . . The goat? Why, Small, of course! The chinless boy is playing alone these days; better pickings elsewhere. . . . Yes, you oughtn't to miss it. See you later. 'Bye."

IV

Now, very little happens at Meadowmead, in the clubhouse or on the links, without David Cameron's knowledge. The waiters talk, the steward gossips, the locker-room boys repeat conversations which they overhear, and the caddies are worse than magpies. David, listening patiently and rubbing his ear, comes by a great deal of interesting information. I felt certain that he would have a true line on the wool market. I found him sitting in front of his shop. He was wearing a collar and tie, which is always a sign that he is at liberty for the afternoon. "You're dressed up to-day, David," said I.

"Ay," said he, "I'm thinkin' I'll be a gallery."

"Is there a match?"

"Ay, a money match. The ter-rms were agreed on at eleven this mornin'. The Cur-rnel is gruntin' an' groanin' with the lumba-ago again. Muster Small has taken a cruel advantake of the auld man. A cruel advantage."

"What are they playing for?" I asked.

David rolled his eyes full upon me and regarded me steadily without blinking.

"A thousan' dollars a side," said he quietly.

"*What?*"

"Ay. Posted in the safe. Muster Small wanted to make it for two. It was a compr-romise."

"But, man, it's highway robbery! One thousand dollars!"

David continued to look at me fixedly.

"Do ye ken, Muster Bell," said he at last, "that's precisely what I'm thinkin' it is mysel'—juist highway robbery."

"What handicap is he giving Small?"

"None. Muster Small wouldna listen to it. He said the Cur-rnel was a'ready handicapped wi' auld age, lumba-ago, an' cauld feet. His remarks were quite personal, ye'll understand, an' he counted down the notes on the table an' blethered an' howled an' reminded the Cur-rnel that he had lost three hunder to him the last week. The auld gentleman was fair bedamned an' bullied into makin' the match, an' he was in such a towerin' rage he could scarce write a check. . . . Ay, I'm thinkin' it will be a divertin' match to watch."

Archie arrived just as Small and Colonel Jimmy started for the first tee. We formed the gallery, with David Cameron trailing along unobtrusively in the rear, sucking reflectively on a briar pipe. The Colonel gave us one look, which said very plainly that he hoped we would choke, but thought better of it and dropped back to shake hands and explain his position in the matter.

"Pretty stiff money match, isn't it, Colonel?" asked Archie.

"And surely you're not playing him *even!*" said I. "No handicap?"

Colonel Jimmy had the grace to blush; I wouldn't have believed he knew how. I suppose if you should catch a wolf in a sheepfold the wolf would blush too—not because he felt that he was doing anything wrong by his own standards, but because of the inferences that might be drawn from the wool in his teeth. The Colonel didn't in the least mind preying on lambs, but he hated to have a gallery catch him at it. He hastened to explain that it was all the lamb's fault.

He said that he found himself in an unfortunate situation because he had allowed his temper to get away from him and had "answered a fool according to his folly." He blamed Small for forcing him into a position where he might falsely be accused of taking an unfair advantage. He whined pitifully about his lumbago—the worst attack he remembered—and

earnestly hoped that "the facts would not be misrepresented in any way." He also said that he regretted the entire incident and had offered to call off the match, but had been grossly insulted and accused of having cold feet.

"It isn't that I want the man's money," said he, "but I feel that he should have a lesson in politeness!"

On the whole, it was a very poor face for a wolf to wear. He groaned some more about his lumbago, which he said was killing him by inches, and went forward to join Small on the tee.

"The old pirate!" said Archie. "He wasn't counting on any witnesses, and our being here is going to complicate matters. Did you get what he said about hoping the facts would not be misrepresented? He's wondering what we'll tell the other members, and for the looks of the thing he won't dare rook Small too badly. Our being here will force him to make the match as close as he can."

"Yes," said I, "there ought to be some pretty fair comedy."

Small came over to us while the Colonel was teeing his ball. He looked bigger and rawer than ever in white flannel, and he didn't seem in the least worried about his bet. He was just as offensive as ever, and I could appreciate the Colonel's point about giving him a lesson in politeness.

As early as the first hole it became evident—painfully so—that Colonel Jimmy was out to make the match a close one at any cost. It would never do to give Small the impression that his pockets had been picked. In order to make him think that he had had a run for his money, the Colonel had to play as bad golf as Small—and he did it, shades of Tom Morris and other departed golfers, he did it!

Bad golf is a depressing spectacle to watch, but deliberately bad golf, cold-blooded, premeditated and studied out in advance, is a crime, and that is the only word which fits Colonel Jimmy's shameless exhibition. His only excuse was that it needed criminally bad golf to make the match seem close. The old fellow's driving was atrocious, he slopped and flubbed his iron shots in a disgusting manner, and his putting would have disgraced a blind man. Lumbago was his alibi, and he worked it overtime for our benefit. After every shot he would drop his club, clap his hands on his back, and groan like an entire hospital ward.

The only noticeable improvement in Small's playing was that he managed somehow or other to keep his ball on the course, though the lopsided, thumb-handed, clubfooted way he went at his shots was enough to make angels weep. Then, too, he didn't have so much to say and didn't yell after he hit the ball.

Thirteen holes they played, and I venture the statement that nothing like that match has ever

been seen since the time when golf balls were stuffed with feathers. By playing just as badly as he knew how, getting into all the bunkers, and putting everywhere but straight at the cup, Colonel Jimmy arrived on the fourteenth tee all square with Small. They had each won two holes; the others had been halved in scandalous figures.

I could tell by the way the Colonel messed the fourteenth hole that he wanted to halve that too. He certainly didn't try to win it. Small's fifth shot was in the long grass just off the edge and to the right of the putting green. Colonel Jimmy laid his sixth within three feet of the cup.

"Boy, give me that shovel!" said Small, and the caddie handed him a niblick. It wasn't really a bad lie, but the ball had to be chopped out of three inches of grass.

"In a case of this kind," said Small, "I guess you trust to luck, what?" He played a short chop shot and the ball went hopping toward the pin, hit the back of the cup with a plunk, and dropped for a six. Of course it was a pure accident.

"Fluke!" said Colonel Jimmy, rather annoyed.

"Sure!" said Small. "But it wins the hole just the same!"

I knew then that the comedy was over for the day. Four holes remained to be played, and the Colonel was one down. It was never his

policy to leave anything to chance. He would run the string out at top speed. David Cameron came up from the rear.

"They'll play golf from here in," he whispered.

"They!" said I. "One of 'em will!"

"Do ye really think so?" said David.

Our Number Fifteen is 278 yards long, over perfectly level ground. There are bunkers to the right and left of the putting green and a deep sand trap behind it. It is a short hole, but the sort of one which needs straight shooting and an accurate pitch. Of all the holes on the course, I think it is the Colonel's favourite.

"My honour, eh?" said Small. "That being the case, I guess I'll just rap it out of the lot!"

He didn't bother to measure the distance or take a practice swing. He didn't even address the ball. He walked up to it and swung his driver exactly as a man would swing a baseball bat—tremendous power but no form whatever—and the wonder is that he hit it clean. A white speck went sailing up the course, rising higher and higher in the air. When the ball stopped rolling it was 260 yards from the tee and on a direct line with the pin.

"Beat that!" said Small.

Colonel Jimmy didn't say anything, but he grunted whole volumes. It takes more than a long drive to rattle that old reprobate. He whipped his ball 200 yards down the course and stepped off the tee so well satisfied with him-

self that he forgot to groan and put his hands on his back. Small laughed.

"Lumbago not so bad now, eh?" said he.

"I—I may be limbering up a bit," said the Colonel. "The long drive isn't everything, you know; it's the second shot that counts!"

"All right," said Small. "Let's see one!"

Colonel Jimmy studied his lie for some time and went through all the motions, but when the shot came it was a beauty—a mashie pitch which landed his ball five feet from the cup.

"Beat that one!" said he.

"I'll just do that thing!" said Small. And he did. Of course he had a short approach, as approaches go, but even so I was not prepared to see him play a push shot and rim the cup, leaving his ball stone dead for a three. Colonel Jimmy was not prepared to see it either, and I have reason to believe that the push shot jarred the old rascal from his rubber heels upward. He went about the sinking of that five-foot putt with as much deliberation as if his thousand dollars depended on it. He sucked in his breath and got down on all fours—a man with lumbago couldn't have done it on a bet—and he studied the roll of the turf for a full minute—studied it to some purpose, for when he tapped the ball it ran straight and true into the cup, halving the hole.

"You're getting better every minute!" said Small. "I'm some little lumbago specialist, believe me!"

Colonel Jimmy didn't answer, but he looked thoughtful and just the least mite worried. One down and three to go for a thousand dollars—it's a situation that will worry the best of 'em.

Number Sixteen was where the light dawned on me. It is a long, tricky hole—bogey 6, par 5—and if the Colonel hadn't made another phenomenal approach, laying his ball dead from fifty yards off the green, Small would have won that too. They halved in fives, but it was Small's second shot that opened my eyes. He used a cleek where most players would try a brassie, and he sent the ball screaming toward the flag—220 yards—and at no time was it more than ten feet from the ground. I was behind him when he played, and I can swear that there wasn't an inch of hook or slice on that ball. The cleek is no club for a novice. I remembered the niblick shot on the fourteenth. That was surely a fluke, but how about the push shot on fifteen? English professionals have written whole books about the push shot, but mighty few men have ever learned to play it. Putting that and the cleek shot together, the light broke in on me—and my first impulse was to kick Archie MacBride.

I don't know who Colonel Jimmy wanted to kick, but he looked as if he would relish kicking somebody. He had been performing sums in mental addition, too, and he got the answer about the same time that I did.

"It's queer about that lumbago," said Small again.

"Yes," snapped the old man, "but it's a lot queerer the way you've picked up this game in the last two holes!"

"Well," and Small laughed, "you remember that I warned you I never could play for piker money, Colonel—that is, not very *well.*"

Colonel Jimmy gave him a look that was all wolf—and cornered wolf at that. He answered Small with a nasty sneer.

"So you can't play well unless big money is bet, eh? That is exactly what I'm beginning to think, sir!"

"At any rate," said Small, "I've cured your lumbago for you, Colonel. You can charge that thousand to doctor bills!"

Colonel Jimmy gulped a few times, his neck swelled and his face turned purple. There wasn't a single thing he could find to say in answer to that remark. He started for the seventeenth tee, snarling to himself. I couldn't stand it any longer. I drew Archie aside.

"I think you might have told me," I said.

"Told you what?"

"Why, about Small—if that's his name. What have you done? Rung in a professional on the old man?"

"Professional, your grandmother!" said Archie. "Small is an amateur in good standing. Darned good standing. If the Colonel knew as much about the Middle West as he pre-

tends to know, he'd have heard of Small. Wonder how the old boy likes the Chicago method of shearing a pig?"

The old boy didn't like it at all, but the seventeenth hole put the crown on his rage and mortification. Small drove another long straight ball, and after the Colonel had got through sneering about that he topped his own drive, slopped his second into a bunker, and reached the green in five when he should have been there in two. I thought the agony was over, but I didn't give Small credit for cat-and-mouse tendencies.

"In order to get all the good out of this lumbago treatment," said he, "it ought to go the full eighteen holes." Then, with a deliberation that was actually insulting, he played his second shot straight into a deep sand trap. I heard a queer clucking, choking noise behind me, but it was only David Cameron doing his best to keep from laughing out loud.

"Muster Small is puttin' the shoe on the other foot!" said David. "Ay, it's his turn to waste a few now."

"Cheer up, Colonel!" said Small. "You fooled away a lot of shots early in the match—on account of your lumbago, of course. I'm just as generous as you are when it comes to halving holes with an easy mark." To prove it Small missed a niblick shot a foot, but pitched out on his fourth, and, by putting all over the green, finally halved the hole.

When Small stood up on the eighteenth tee for his last drive he looked over at the Colonel and nodded his head. "Colonel?" said he.

Colonel Jimmy grunted—rather a profane grunt, I thought.

"Dormie!" said Small.

"Confound it, sir! You talk too much!"

"So I've heard," said Small. "I'll make you a business proposition, Colonel. Double or quits on the last hole? I understand that's what you do when you're sure you can win. Two thousand or nothing? . . . No? Oh, all right! No harm done, I suppose?"

Colonel Jimmy had a burglar's chance to halve the match by winning the last hole, and he fought for it like a cornered wolf. They were both on the green in threes, Small ten feet from the cup and the Colonel at least fifteen. If he could sink his putt and Small should miss his, the match would be square again.

The old man examined every blade of grass between his ball and the hole. Three times he set himself to make the putt, and then got down to take another look at the roll of the green—proof that his nerve was breaking at last. When he finally hit the ball it was a weak, fluttering stroke, and though the ball rolled true enough, it stopped four feet short of the cup.

"Never up, never in!" said Small. "Well, here goes for the thousand-dollar doctor bill! Lumbago is a very painful ailment, Colonel. It's worth something to be cured of it." Colo-

nel Jimmy didn't say a word. He looked at Small and then he turned and looked at MacBride. All his smooth and oily politeness had deserted him; his little tricks and hypocrisies had dropped away and left the wolf exposed—snarling and showing his teeth. I thought that he was going to throw his putter at Archie, but he turned and threw it into the lake instead—into the middle, where the water is deep. Then he marched into the clubhouse, stiff as a ramrod, and so he missed seeing Small sink his ten-foot putt.

"An' ye were really surprised?" said David Cameron to me.

"I was," said I. "When did you find it out, David?"

"Come out to the shop," said the professional. He showed me a list of the players rated by the Western Golf Association. A man by the name of Small was very close to the top—very close indeed.

We don't know whether the Colonel is going to lay the case before the committee or not. If he does, we shall have to explain why he has not had an attack of lumbago since.

THE MAN WHO QUIT

I

MR. INGRAM TECUMSEH PARKES squinted along the line of his short putt, breathed hard through his prominent and highly decorative nose, concentrated his mighty intellect upon the task before him, and tapped the small white ball ever so lightly. It rolled toward the cup, wavered from the line, returned to it again, seemed about to stop short of its destination, hovered for one breathless instant on the very lip, and at last fell into the hole.

Mr. Parkes, who had been hopping up and down on one leg, urging the ball forward with inarticulate commands and violent contortions of his body, and behaving generally in the manner of a baseball fan or a financially interested spectator at a horse race, suddenly relaxed with a deep grunt of relief. He glanced at his opponent—a tall, solemn-looking gentleman—who was regarding Mr. Parkes with an unblinking stare in which disgust, chagrin and fathomless melancholy were mingled.

"Well, that'll be about all for you, Mister Good Player!" announced Parkes with rather more gusto than is considered tactful at such a time. "Yes; that cooks your goose, I guess! Three down and two to go, and I licked you"—here his voice broke and became shrill with triumph. "I licked you on an even game! An even game—d'you get that, Bob? Didn't have to use my handicap at all! Ho, ho! Licked a six-handicap man on an even game! That's pretty good shooting, I guess! You didn't think I had it in me, did you?"

The other man did not reply, but continued to stare moodily at Mr. Parkes. He did not even seem to be listening. After a time the victor became aware of a certain tenseness in the situation. His stream of self-congratulation checked to a thin trickle and at last ran dry. There was a short, painful silence.

"I don't want to rub it in, or anything," said Parkes apologetically; "but I've got a right to swell up a little. You'll admit that. I didn't think I had a chance when we started, and I never trimmed a six-handicap man before——"

"Oh, that's all right!" said the other with the nervous gesture of one who brushes away an unpleasant subject. "Holler your fat head off—I don't care. Give yourself a *loud* cheer while you're at it. I'm not paying any attention to you."

Mr. Parkes was not exactly pleased with the permission thus handsomely granted.

"No need for you to get sore about it," was the sulky comment.

The vanquished golfer cackled long and loud, but there was a bitter undertone in his mirth.

"Sore? Who, me? Just because a lopsided, left-handed freak like you handed me a licking? Where do you get that stuff?"

"Well," said Mr. Parkes, still aggrieved, "if you're not sore you'd better haul in the signs. Your lower lip is sticking out a foot and you look as if you'd lost your last friend."

"I've lost every shot in my bag," was the solemn reply. "I've lost my game. You don't know what that means, because you've never had any game to lose. It's awful—awful!"

"Forget it!" advised Parkes. "Everybody has a bad day once in a while."

"You don't understand," persisted the other earnestly. "A month ago I was breaking eighties as regular as clockwork, and every club I had was working fine. Then, all at once, something went wrong—my shots left me. I couldn't drive any more; couldn't keep my irons on the course—couldn't do anything. I kept plugging away, thinking my game would come back to me, hoping every shot I made that there would be some improvement; but I'm getting worse instead of better! Nobody knows any more about the theory of golf than I do, but I can't seem to make myself do the right thing at the right time. I've changed my stance; I've changed my grip; I've changed my swing;

I've never tried harder in my life—and look at me! I can't even give an eighteen-handicap man a battle!"

"Forget it!" repeated Parkes. "The trouble with you is that you worry too much about your golf. It isn't a business, you poor fish! It's a sport—a recreation. I get off my game every once in a while, but I never worry. It always comes back to me. Last Sunday I was rotten; to-day——"

"To-day you shot three sevens and a whole flock of sixes! Bah! I suppose you call that good—eh?"

"Never you mind!" barked the indignant Mr. Parkes. "Never you mind! Those sevens and sixes were plenty good enough to lick you! Come on, take a reef in your underlip and we'll play the last two holes. The match is over, so you won't have that to worry about."

"You don't get me at all," protested the loser. "Not being a golfer yourself, you can't understand a golfer's feelings. It's not being beaten that troubles me. It's knowing just how to make a shot and then falling down on the execution—that's what breaks my heart! If ever you get so good that you can shoot a seventy-eight on this course, and your game leaves you overnight—steps right out from under you and leaves you flat—then you'll know how I feel."

"There you go!" complained Parkes. "Knocking my game again! I'm a bad player

—oh, a rotten player! I admit it; but I can lick you to-day. And just to prove it I'll bet you a ball a hole from here in—no handicap—not even a bisque. What say?"

"Got you!" was the grim response. "Maybe if I hit one of my old-time tee shots again it'll put some heart in me. Shoot!"

Twenty minutes later the two men walked across the broad lawn toward the clubhouse. Mr. Ingram Tecumseh Parkes was in a hilarious mood. He grinned from ear to ear and illustrated an animated discourse with sweeping gestures. His late opponent shuffled slowly along beside him, kicking the inoffending daisies out of his way. His shoulders sagged listlessly, his hands hung open at his sides, and his eyes were fixed on the ground. Utter dejection was written in every line and angle of his drooping form. When he entered the lounging room he threw himself heavily into the nearest chair and remained motionless, staring out of the window but seeing nothing.

"What's the matter, Bob? You sick?" The query was twice repeated before the stricken man lifted his head slightly and turned his lacklustre eyes upon a group of friends seated at a table close at hand.

"Eh? What's that? . . . Yes; I'm sick. Sick and disgusted with this double-dash-blanked game."

Now there comes to every experienced golfer

a time when from a full heart he curses the Royal and Ancient Pastime. Mr. Robert Coyne's friends were experienced golfers; consequently his statement was received with calmness—not to say a certain amount of levity.

"We've all been there!" chuckled one of the listeners.

"Many's the time!" supplemented another.

"Last week," admitted a third, "I broke a driver over a tee box. I'd been slicing with it for a month, so I smashed the damned shaft. Did me a lot of good. Of course, Bob, you're a quiet, even-tempered individual, and you can't understand what a relief it is a break a club that has been annoying you. Try it some time."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Coyne. "I'd have to break 'em all!"

"Maybe you don't drink enough," hazarded another.

"Cheer up!" said the first speaker. "You'll be all right this afternoon."

The afflicted one lifted his head again and gazed mournfully at his friends.

"No," said he; "I won't be all right this afternoon. I'll be all wrong. I haven't hit a single decent shot in three weeks—not one. I—I don't know what's the matter with me. I'm sick of it, I tell you."

"Yep; he's sick," chirped the cheerful Mr. Parkes, coming in like an April zephyr. "He's sick, and I made him sicker. I'm a rotten-bad golfer—ask Bob if I ain't. I'm left-handed;

I stand too close to my ball; I hook every tee shot; I top my irons; I can't hole a ten-foot putt in a washtub; but, even so, I handed this six man a fine trimming this morning. Hung it all over him like a blanket. Beat him three and two without any handicap. Licked him on an even game; but I couldn't make him like it. What do you think of that, eh?"

"How about it, Bob?" asked one of the listeners. "Is this a true bill?" Mr. Coyne groaned and continued to stare out of the window.

"Oh, he won't deny it!" grinned Parkes. "I'm giving it to you straight. Then, at Number Seventeen I offered to bet him a ball a hole, just to put some life into him and stir up his—er—cupidity. I guess that's the word. No handicap, you understand. Not even a bisque. What did he do? Why, he speared a nice juicy nine on Seventeen; and he picked up his ball on Eighteen, after slicing one square into the middle of Hell's Half Acre. Yes; he's sick all right enough!"

"He has cause—if you beat him," said one of the older members.

"I wish I could win from a *well* man once in a while," complained Parkes. "Every time I lick somebody I find I've been picking on an invalid."

"Oh, shut up and let Bob alone!"

"Yes; quit riding him."

"Don't rub it in!"

Mr. Coyne mumbled something to the effect that talk never bothered him, and the general conversation languished until the devil himself prompted one of the veteran golfers to offer advice:

"I'll tell you what's wrong with you, Bob. You're overgolfed. You've been playing too much lately."

"You've gone stale," said another.

"Nonsense!" argued a third. "You don't go stale at golf; you simply get off your game. Now what Bob ought to do is to take one club and a dozen balls and stay with that club until he gets his shots back."

"That's no good," said a fourth. "If his wood has gone bad on him he ought to leave his driver in his bag and use an iron off the tee. Chick Evans does that."

"An iron off the tee," said the veteran, "is a confession of weakness."

"Bob, why don't you get the 'pro' to give you a lesson or two? He might be able to straighten you out."

"Oh, what does a professional know about the theory of golf? All he can do is to tell you to watch him and do the way he does. Now what Bob needs——"

Every man who plays golf, no matter how badly, feels himself competent to offer advice. For a long ten minutes the air was heavy with well-meant suggestions. Coming at the wrong time, nothing is more galling than sympathetic

counsel. Bob Coyne, six-handicap man and expert in the theory of golf, hunched his shoulders and endured it all without comment or protest. Somewhere in his head an idea was taking definite shape. Slowly but surely he was being urged to the point where decision merges into action.

"I tell you," said the veteran with the calm insistence of age, "Bob ought to take a lay-off. He ought to forget golf for a while."

Coyne rose and moved toward the door. As his hand touched the knob the irrepressible Parkes hurled the last straw athwart a heavy burden.

"If ever I get so that I can't enjoy this game any more," said he, "I hope I'll have strength of character enough to quit playing it."

"Oh, you do, do you?" demanded Coyne with the cold rage of a quiet man, goaded beyond the limit of his endurance. "Well, don't flatter yourself. You haven't—and you won't!"

The door closed behind this rather cryptic remark, and the listeners looked at each other and shook their heads.

"Never knew Bob to act like this before," said one.

"Anything can happen when a man's game is in a slump," said the veteran. "Take a steady, brainy player—a first-class golfer; let him lose his shots for a week and there's no telling what he'll do. Nothing to it—this is the

most interesting and the most exasperating outdoor sport in the world.

"Just when you think you've learned all there is to learn about it—bang! And there you are, flat!"

"He's been wolfing at me all morning," said Parkes. "Kind of silly to let a game get on your nerves, eh?"

"You'll never know how a real golfer feels when his shots go bad on him," was the consoling response. "There he goes with his bag of clubs. Practice won't help him any. What he needs is a lay-off."

"He's headed for the caddie shed," said Parkes. "I'd hate to carry his bag this afternoon. Be afraid he'd bite me, or something. . . . Say, have you fellows heard about the two Scotchmen, playing in the finals for a cup? It seems that MacNabb lost his ball on the last hole, and MacGregor was helping him look for it——"

"I always did like that yarn," interrupted the veteran. "It's just as good now as it was twenty years ago. Shoot!"

A dozen caddies were resting in the shed, and as they rested they listened to the lively comment of the dean of the bag-carrying profession, a sixteen-year-old golfing Solomon who answered to the name of Butch:

"And you oughta seen him at the finish—all he needed was an undertaker! You know how

good he used to be. Straight down the middle all the time. The poor sucker has blowed every shot in his bag—darned if it wasn't pitiful to watch him. He ain't even got his chip shot left. And on the last hole——"

"S-s-s-t!" whispered a youngster, glancing in the direction of the clubhouse. "Here he comes now!"

Because Mr. Coyne's game had been the subject of full and free discussion, and because they did not wish him to know it, every trace of expression vanished instantly from the twelve youthful faces. The first thing a good caddie learns is repression. Twelve wooden countenances turned to greet the visitor. His presence in the caddie shed was unusual, but even this fact failed to kindle the light of interest in the eye of the youngest boy. Coyne gave them small time to wonder what brought him into their midst.

"Butch," said he, speaking briskly and with an air of forced cheerfulness, "if you had a chance to pick a club out of this bag, which one would you take?"

"If I had a *what*?" asked Butch, pop-eyed with amazement.

"Which one of these clubs do you like the best?"

"Why, the light mid-iron, sir," answered the boy without an instant's hesitation. "The light mid-iron, sure!"

Mr. Coyne drew the club from the bag.

"It's yours," said he briefly.

"Mine!" ejaculated Butch. "You—you ain't *giving* it to me, are you?" Coyne nodded. "But—but what's the idea? You can't get along without that iron, sir. You use it more than any other club in your bag!"

"Take it if you want it, Butch. I'm going to quit playing golf."

"Yes, you are!" exclaimed the caddie, availing himself of one of the privileges of long acquaintance. "Nobody ever quits unless they get so old they can't walk!"

"Very well," said Coyne. "If you don't want this club, maybe some of these other boys——"

"Not a chance!" cried Butch, seizing the mid-iron. "I didn't think you meant it at first. I——"

"Now then, Frenchy," said Coyne, "which club will you have?"

"This is on the square, is it?" demanded Frenchy suspiciously. "This ain't Injun givin'? Because—me, I had my eye on that brassy for some time now. Weighted just right. Got a swell shaft in it. . . . Thank you, mister! Gee! What do think of that—hey? Some club!"

At this point the mad philanthropist was mobbed by a group of eager youngsters, each one clamouring to share in his reckless generosity. So far as the boys knew, the situation was without parallel in golfing history; but this

was a phase of the matter that could come up later for discussion. The main thing was to get one of those clubs while the getting was good.

"Please, can I have that driver?"

"Aw, mister, you know me!"

"The mashie would be my pick!"

"Who ast *you* to pick anything, Dago? You ain't got an old brass putter there, have you, sir? All my life I been wantin' a brass putter."

"Gimme the one that's left over?" "Quitcha shovin', there! That's a mighty fine cleek. Wisht I had it!"

In less time than it takes to tell it the bag was empty. The entire collection of golfing instruments, representing the careful and discriminating accumulation of years, passed into new hands. Everybody knows that no two golf clubs are exactly alike, and that a favourite, once lost or broken, can never be replaced. A perfect club possesses something more than proper weight and balance; it has personality and is, therefore, not to be picked up every day in the week. The driver, the spoon, the cleek, the heavy mid-iron, the jigger, the mashie, the scarred old niblick, the two putters—everything was swept away in one wild spasm of renunciation; and if it hurt Coyne to part with these old friends he bore the pain like a Spartan.

"Well, I guess that'll be all," said he at length.

"Mr. Coyne," said Butch, who had been prac-

tising imaginary approach shots with the light mid-iron, "you wouldn't care if I had about an inch taken off this shaft, would you? It's a little too long for me."

"Cut a foot off it if you like."

"I just wanted to know," said Butch apologetically. "Lots of people say they're going to quit; but——"

"It isn't a case of going to quit with me," said Coyne. "I *have* quit! You can make kindling wood out of that shaft if you like."

Then, with the empty bag under his arm, and his bridges aflame behind him, he marched back to the clubhouse, his chin a bit higher in the air than was absolutely necessary.

Later his voice was heard in the shower room, loud and clear above the sound of running water. It suited him to sing and the ditty of his choice was a cheerful one; but the rollicking words failed to carry conviction. An expert listener might have detected a tone smacking strongly of defiance and suspected that Mr. Coyne was singing to keep up his courage.

When next seen he was clothed, presumably in his right mind, and rummaging deep in his locker. On the floor was a pile of miscellaneous garments—underwear, sweaters, shirts, jackets, knickerbockers and stockings. To his assistance came Jasper, for twenty years a fixture in the locker room and as much a part of the club as the sun porch or the front door.

"Gettin' yo' laundry out, suh? Lemme give you a hand."

Now Jasper was what is known as a character; and, moreover, he was a privileged one. He was on intimate terms with every member of the Country Club and entitled to speak his mind at all times. He had made a close study of the male golfing animal in all his varying moods; he knew when to sympathise with a loser, when to congratulate a winner, and when to remain silent. Jasper was that rare thing known as the perfect locker room servant.

"This isn't laundry," explained Coyne. "I'm just cleaning house—that's all. . . . Think you can use these rubber-soled golf shoes?"

"Misteh Coyne, suh," said Jasper, "them shoes is as good as new. Whut you want to give 'em away faw?"

"Because I won't be wearing 'em any more."

"H-m-m! Too small, maybe?"

"No; they fit all right. Fact of the matter is, Jasper, I'm sick of this game and I'm going to quit it."

Jasper's eyes oscillated rapidly.

"Aw, no, Misteh Coyne!" said he in the tone one uses when soothing a peevish child. "You jus' *think* you goin' to quit—tha's all!"

"You never heard me say I was going to quit before, did you?" demanded Coyne.

"No, suh; no."

"Well, when I say I'm going to quit, you can

bet I mean it!" Jasper reflected on this statement.

"Yes, suh," said he gently. "Betteh let me put them things back, Misteh Coyne. They in the way here."

"What's the use of putting 'em back in the locker? They're no good to me. Make a bundle of 'em and give 'em to the poor."

"Mph! Po' folks ain't wearin' them shawt pants much—not this season, nohow!"

"I don't care what you do with 'em! Throw 'em away—burn 'em up—pitch 'em out. I don't care!"

"Yes, suh. All right, suh. Jus' as you say." Jasper rolled the heap into a bundle and began tying it with the sleeves of a shirt. "I'll look afteh 'em, suh."

"Never mind looking after 'em. Get rid of the stuff. I'm through, I tell you—done—finished—quit!"

"Yes, suh. I heard you the firs' time you said it."

The negro was on his knees fumbling with the knot. Something in his tone irritated Coyne—caused him to feel that he was not being taken seriously.

"I suppose a lot of members quit—eh?" said he.

"Yes, suh," replied Jasper with a flash of ivory. "Some of 'em quits oncet a month, reg'leh."

"But you never heard of a case where a

player gave all his clubs away, did you?" demanded Coyne.

"Some of 'em *breaks* clubs," said Jasper; "but they always gits new shafts put in. Some of 'em th'ow 'em in the lake; but they fish 'em out ag'in. But—give 'em away? No, suh! They don' neveh do that."

"Well," said Coyne, "when I make up my mind to do a thing I do it right. I've given away every club I owned."

Jasper lifted his head and stared upward, mouth open and eyelids fluttering rapidly.

"You—you given yo' clubs away!" he ejaculated. "Who'd you give 'em to, suh?"

"Oh, to the caddies," was the airy response. "Made a sort of general distribution. One club to each kid."

"Misteh Coyne," said Jasper earnestly, "tha's foolishness—jus' plain foolishness. S'pose you ain' been playin' yo' reg'leh game lately—s'pose you had a lot o' bad luck—that ain' no reason faw you to do a thing like that. Givin' all them expensible clubs to them pinheaded li'l' boys! Lawd! Lawd! They don't know how to treat 'em ! They'll be splittin' the shafts, an' crackin' the heads, an' nickin' up the irons, an'——"

"Well," interrupted Coyne, "what of it? I hope they do break 'em!"

Jasper shook his head sorrowfully and returned to the bundle. While studying golfers

he had come to know the value placed on golfing tools.

"O' course," said he slowly, "yo' own business is yo' own business, Misteh Coyne. Only, suh, it seem like a awful shame to me. Seem like bustin' up housekeepin' afteh you been married a long time. . . . Why not wait a few days an' see how you feel then?"

"No! I'm through."

Jasper jerked his head in the direction of the lounging room.

"You tol' the otheh gen'lemen whut you goin' to do?" he asked.

"What's the use? They'd only laugh. They wouldn't believe me. Let 'em find it out for themselves. And, by the way—there's my empty bag in the corner. Dispose of it somehow. Give it away—sell it. You can have whatever you get for it."

"Thank you, suh. You comin' back to see us once in a while?"

"Oh, I suppose so. With the wife and the kids. Well, take care of yourself."

Jasper followed him to the door and watched until the little runabout disappeared down the driveway.

"All foolishness—tha's whut it is!" soliloquised the negro.

"This golf game—she's sutny a goat getteh when she ain' goin' right. Me, I ratheh play this Af'ican golf with two dice. That's some goat getteh, too, an' lots of people quits it;

but I notice they always comes back. Yes, suh; they always comes back."

II

As the runabout coughed and sputtered along the county road the man at the wheel had time to think over the whole matter. Everything considered, he decided that he had acted wisely.

"Been playing too much golf, anyway," he told himself. "Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays—too much! . . . And then worrying about my game in between. It'll be off my mind now. . . . One thing sure—Mary'll be glad to hear the news. That old joke of hers about being a golf widow won't go any more. Yes, she'll have to dig up a new one. . . . Maybe I have been a little selfish and neglectful. I'll make up for it now, though. Sundays we can take the big car and go on picnics. The kids'll like that."

He pursued this train of thought until he felt almost virtuous. He could see himself entering the house; he could picture his wife's amazement and pleasure; he could hear himself saying something like this:

"Well, my dear, you've got your wish at last. After thinking it all over I've decided to cut out the golf and devote myself to the family. Yes; I'm through!"

In this highly commendable spirit he arrived at home, only to find the shades drawn and the

front door locked. As Coyne felt for his key ring he remembered that his wife had said something about taking the children to spend the day with her mother. It was also the servant's afternoon off and the house was empty. Coyne was conscious of a slight disappointment; he was the bearer of glad tidings, but he had no audience.

"Oh, well," he thought; "it's been a long time since I had a quiet Sunday afternoon at home. Do me good. Guess I'll read a while and then run over to mother's for supper. I don't read as much as I used to. Man ought to keep up to date."

Then, because he was a creature of habit and the most methodical of men, he must have his pipe and slippers before sitting down with his book. Mary Coyne was a good wife and a faithful mother, but she abominated a pipe in the living room; and she tolerated slippers only when they were of her own choosing.

Now there are things which every woman knows; but there is one thing which no woman has ever known and no woman will ever know —namely, that she is not competent to select slippers for her lord and master. Bob Coyne was a patient man, but he loathed slippers his wife picked out for him. He was pledged to a worn and disreputable pair of the pattern known as Romeos—relics of his bachelor days. They were run down at the heel and thin of sole; but they were dear to his heart and he

clung to them obstinately in spite of their shabby appearance. After the honeymoon it had been necessary to speak sternly with his wife on the subject of the Romeos, else she would have thrown them on the ash heap. Since that interview Mrs. Coyne—obedient soul!—had spent a great portion of her married life in finding safe hiding places for those wretched slippers; but no matter where she put them, they seemed certain of a triumphant resurrection.

Coyne went on a still hunt for the Romeos, and found them at last, tucked away in the clothes closet of the spare room upstairs. This closet was a sort of catchall, as the closets of spare rooms are apt to be; and as Coyne stooped to pick up the slippers he knocked down something which had been standing in a dark corner. It fell with a heavy thump, and there on the floor at his feet was a rusty old mid-iron—the first golf club Coyne had ever owned.

He had not seen that mid-iron in years, but he remembered it well. He picked it up, sighted along the shaft, found it still reasonably straight and unwarped, balanced the club in his hands, waggled it once as if to make a shot; then he replaced it hastily, seized the slippers, and hurried downstairs.

The book of his selection was one highly recommended by press and pulpit, hence an ideal tale for a Sunday afternoon; so he dragged an easy-chair to the front window, lighted his

pipe, put his worn Romeos on a taboret, and settled down to solid comfort. In spite of the fact that the book was said to be gripping, and entertaining from cover to cover, Coyne encountered some difficulty in getting into the thing. He skimmed through the first chapter, yawned and looked at his watch.

"They're just getting away for the afternoon round," said he; and then, with the air of one who has caught himself in a fault, he attacked Chapter Two. It proved even worse than the first. He told himself that the characters were out of drawing, the situations impossible, and the humour strained or stale.

At the end of Chapter Three he pitched the book across the room and closed his eyes. Five minutes later he rose, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and went slowly upstairs. He assured himself he was not in search of anything; but his aimless wanderings brought him at last to the spare room, where he seated himself on the edge of the bed. He remained there for twenty minutes, motionless, staring into space. Then he rose, crossed the room and disappeared in the clothes closet. When he came out the rusty mid-iron came with him. Was this a sign of weakness, of deterioration in the moral fibre, an indication of regret? Perish the thought! The explanation Mr. Coyne offered himself was perfectly satisfactory. He merely wished to examine the ten-year-old shaft and ascertain whether it was cracked or not. He carried the

venerable souvenir to the window and scrutinised it closely; the shaft was sound.

"A good club yet," he muttered.

As he stood there, holding the old mid-iron in his hands, ten years slipped away from him. He remembered that club very well—almost as well as a man remembers his first sweetheart. He remembered other things too—remembered that, as a youth, he had never had the time or the inclination to play at games of any sort. He had been too busy getting his start, as the saying goes. Then, at thirty, married and well on his way to business success, he had felt the need of open air and exercise. He had mentioned this to a friend and the friend had suggested golf.

"But that's an old man's game!" Yes; he had said that very thing. His ears burned at the recollection of his folly.

"Think so? Tackle it and see."

He had been persuaded to spend one afternoon at the Country Club. Is there a golfer in all the world who needs to be told what happened to Mr. Robert Coyne? He had hit one long, straight tee shot; he had holed one difficult putt; and the whole course of his serious, methodical existence had been changed. The man who does not learn to play any game until he is thirty years of age is quite capable of going daft over tiddledywinks or dominoes. If he takes up the best and most interesting of

all outdoor sports his family may count itself fortunate if he does not become violent.

Never the sort of person who could be content to do anything badly, Bob Coyne had applied himself to the Royal and Ancient Pastime with all the simple earnestness and dogged determination of a silent, self-centred man. He had taken lessons from the professional. He had brought his driver home and practised with it in the back yard. He had read books on the subject. He had studied the methods and styles of the best players. He had formed theories of his own as to stance and swing. He had even talked golf to his wife—which is the last stage of incurable golfitis.

As he stood at the window, turning the rusty mid-iron in his hands, he recalled the first compliment ever paid him by a good player—the more pleasing because he had not been intended to hear it. It came after he had fought himself out of the duffer class and had reached the point where he was too good for the bad ones, but not considered good enough for the topnotchers.

One day Corkrane had invited him into a foursome—Coyne had been the only man in sight—and Corkrane had taken him as a partner against such redoubtable opponents as Millar and Duffy. Coyne had halved four holes and won two, defeating Millar and Duffy on the home green. Nothing had been said at the time; but later on, while polishing himself with

a towel in the shower room, Coyne had heard Corkrane's voice:

"Hey, Millar!"

"Well?"

"That fellow Coyne—he's not so bad."

"I believe you, Corky. He won the match for you."

"Thought I'd have to carry him on my back; but he was right there all the way round. Yep; Coyne's a comer, sure as you live!"

And the subject of this kindly comment had blushed pink out of sheer gratification.

A pretty good bunch, those fellows out at the club! If it had done nothing else for him, Coyne reflected, golf had widened his circle of friends. Suddenly there came to him the realisation that he would have a great deal of spare time on his hands in the future. Wednesdays and Saturdays would be long days now; and Sundays—— Coyne sighed deeply and swung the rusty mid-iron back and forth as if in the act of studying a difficult approach.

"But what's the use?" he asked himself. "I haven't got a shot left—not a single shot!"

He sat down on the edge of the bed, the mid-iron between his knees and his head in his hands. At the end of twenty minutes he rose and began to prowl about the house, looking into corners, behind doors, and underneath beds and bureaus.

"Seems to me I saw it only the other day,"

said he. "Of course Bobby might have been playing with it and lost it."

It was in the children's playroom that he came upon the thing, which he told himself he found by accident. It was much the worse for wear; nearly all the paint had been worn off it and its surface was covered with tiny dents. Bob Junior had been teaching his dog to fetch and carry and the dents were the prints of sharp puppy teeth.

"Well, what do you think of that!" ejaculated Mr. Coyne, pretending to be surprised. "As I live—a golf ball! Yes; a golf ball!"

He stood looking at it for some time; but at last he picked it up. With the rusty mid-iron in one hand and the ball in the other, he went downstairs, passed through the house, unlocked the back door and went into the yard. Behind the garage was a smooth stretch of lawn, fifty feet in diameter, carefully mowed and rolled. In the centre of this emerald carpet was a hole, and in the hole was a flag. This was Mr. Coyne's private putting green.

"Haven't made a decent chip shot in a month. . . . No use trying now. All confounded foolishness!"

So saying, the man who had renounced Colonel Bogey and all his works dropped the ball twenty feet from the edge of the putting green. The lie did not suit him; so he altered it slightly. Then he planted his disreputable Romeos firmly on the turf, waggled the rusty mid-iron a few

times, pressed the blade lightly behind the ball, and attempted that most difficult of all performances—the chip shot. The ball hopped across the lawn to the smooth surface of the putting green and rolled straight for the cup, struck the flag and stopped two inches from the hole.

"Heavens above!" gasped Mr. Coyne, rubbing his eyes. "Look at that, will you? I hit the pin, by golly—*hit the pin!*"

At dusk Mrs. Coyne returned. The first thing she noticed was that a large rug was missing from the dining room. Having had experience, she knew exactly where to look for it. On the back porch she paused, her hands on her hips. The missing rug was hanging over the clothesline, and her lord and master, in shirtsleeves and the unspeakable Romeos, was driving a single golf ball against it.

Whish-h-h! Click! Thud!

"And I guess that's getting my weight into the swing!" babbled Mr. Coyne. "I've found out what I've been doing that was wrong. Watch me hit this one, Mary."

Mrs. Coyne was everything that a good wife should be, but she sniffed audibly.

"I've told you a dozen times that I didn't want you knocking holes in that rug!" said she.

"Why, there isn't a hole in it, my dear."

"Well, there will be if you keep on. It seems to me, Bob, that you might get enough golf

out at the club. Then you won't scandalise the neighbours by practising in the back yard on Sunday afternoons. What do you suppose they'll think of you?"

"They'll think I'm crazy," was the cheerful response; "but, just between you and me, my dear, I'm not near so crazy right now as I have been!"

III

Jasper was cleaning up the locker room—his regular Monday-morning job. As he worked he crooned the words of an old negro melody:

"Ole bline hawss, come outen the wilderness,
Outen the wilderness, outen the wilderness;
Ole bline hawss——"

The side door opened and Jasper dropped his mop.

"Who's that?" he asked. "This early in the mawnin'?" But when he recognised the caller he did not show the faintest symptoms of surprise. Jasper was more than a perfect servant; he was also a diplomat. "Good mawnin', Misteh Coyne."

The caller seemed embarrassed. He attempted to assume a cheerful expression, but succeeded in producing a silly grin.

"Jasper," said he, "I was a little bit sore yesterday——"

"Yes, suh; an' nobody could blame you,"

said the negro, coming gallantly to the rescue.

"And you know how it is with a man when he's sore."

"Yes, suh. Man don' always mean whut he say—that is, he mean it all right at the *time*. Yes, suh. At—the—time. 'N'en ag'in, he might *change*."

"That's it exactly!" said Coyne, and floundered to a full stop.

Jasper's face was grave, but he found it necessary to fix his eyes on the opposite wall.

"Yes, suh," said he. "Las' month I swo' off too."

"Swore off on what?"

"Craps, Misteh Coyne. Whut Bu't Williams calls Af'ican golf. Yes, suh, I swo' off; but las' night—well, I kind o' fell f'um grace. I fell, suh; but I wasn't damaged so much as some o' them boys in the game." Jasper chuckled to himself. "Yes, suh; I sutny sewed 'em up propeh! Look like I come back in my ole-time fawm!"

"That's it!" Coyne agreed eagerly. "I've got my chip shot back, Jasper. Last night, at home, I was hitting 'em as clean as a whistle. I —I ran out here this morning to have a little talk with you. You remember about those clubs?" Jasper nodded. "That was a foolish thing to do——" began Coyne.

"No, suh!" interrupted Jasper positively. "No, suh! When a man git good an' sore he do a lot o' things whut awdinarily he wouldn't

think o' doin'! Las' month I th'owed away the best paih o' crap dice you eveh saw. You givin' away yo' clubs is exackly the same thing."

"That was what I wanted to see you about," said Coyne with a shamefaced grin. "I was wondering if there wouldn't be some way to get those clubs back—buying 'em from the boys. You could explain——"

Jasper cackled and slapped his knees.

"Same thing all oveh ag'in!" said he. "I th'owed them dice away, Misteh Coyne; but I th'owed 'em kind o' *easy,* an' I knowed where to look. So, when you tol' me 'bout them clubs I—well, suh, I ain' been c'nected with this club twenty yeahs faw nothin'. If I was you, suh, I think I'd look in my lockeh."

Coyne drew the bolt and opened the door. His clothes were hanging on the hooks; his shoes were resting on the steel floor; his golf bag was leaning in the corner, and it was full of clubs—the clubs he had given away the day before! Coyne tried to speak, but the words would not come.

"You see, Misteh Coyne," explained Jasper, "I knowed them fool boys would bust them clubs or somethin', an' I kind of s'pected you'd be wantin' 'em back ag'in; so I didn't take no chances. Afteh you left yestiddy I kind o' took mattehs in my own hands. I tol' them caddies you was only foolin'. The younges' ones, they was open to conviction; but them oldeh boys—they had to be showed. Now that light mid-

iron—I had to give Butch a dollah an' twenty cents faw it. That brassy was a dollah an' a half——"

Ten minutes later the incomparable Jasper was alone in the locker room, examining a very fine sample of the work turned out by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Washington, D. C. Across the bottom of this specimen were two words in large black type: Twenty Dollars.

"Haw!" chuckled Jasper. "I wisht some mo' of these membehs would quit playin' golf!"

THE OOLEY-COW

I

AFTER the explosion, and before Uncle Billy Poindexter and Old Man Sprott had been able to decide just what had hit them, Little Doc Ellis had the nerve to tell me that he had seen the fuse burning for months and months. Little Doc is my friend and I like him, but he resembles many other members of his profession in that he is usually wisest after the post mortem, when it is a wee bit late for the high contracting party.

And at all times Little Doc is full of vintage bromides and figures of speech.

"You have heard the old saw," said he. "A worm will turn if you keep picking on him, and so will a straight road if you ride it long enough. A camel is a wonderful burden bearer, but even a double-humped ship of the desert will sink on your hands if you pile the load on him a bale of hay at a time."

"A worm, a straight road, a camel and a sinking ship," said I. "Whither are we drifting?"

Little Doc did not pay any attention to me. It is a way he has.

"Think," said he, "how much longer a camel will stand up under punishment if he gets his load straw by straw, as it were. The Ooley-cow was a good thing, but Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott did not use any judgment. They piled it on him too thick."

"Meaning," I asked, "to compare the Ooley-cow with a camel?"

"Merely a figure of speech," said Little Doc; "but yes, such was my intention."

"Well," said I, "your figures of speech need careful auditing. A camel can go eight days without a drink——"

Little Doc made impatient motions at me with both hands. He has no sense of humour, and his mind is a one-way track, totally devoid of spurs and derailing switches. Once started, he must go straight through to his destination.

"What I am trying to make plain to your limited mentality," said he, "is that Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott needed a lesson in conservation, and they got it. The Ooley-cow was the easiest, softest picking that ever strayed from the home pasture. With care and decent treatment he would have lasted a long time and yielded an enormous quantity of nourishment, but Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott were too greedy. They tried to corner the milk market, and now they will have to sign tags for their drinks and their golf balls the same as the rest

of us. They have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs."

"A minute ago," said I, "the Ooley-cow was a camel. Now he is a goose—a dead goose, to be exact. Are you all done figuring with your speech?"

"Practically so, yes."

"Then," said I, "I will plaster up the cracks in your argument with the cement of information. I can use figures of speech myself. You are barking up the wrong tree. You are away off your base. It wasn't the loss of a few dollars that made Mr. Perkins run wild in our midst. It was the manner in which he lost them. Let us now dismiss the worm, the camel, the goose and all the rest of the menagerie, retaining only the Ooley-cow. What do you know about cows, if anything?"

"A little," answered my medical friend.

"A mighty little. You know that a cow has hoofs, horns and a tail. The same description would apply to many creatures, including Satan himself. Your knowledge of cows is largely academic. Now me, I was raised on a farm, and there were cows in my curriculum. I took a seven-year course in the gentle art of acquiring the lacteal fluid. Cow is my specialty, my long suit, my best hold. Believe it or not, when we christened old Perkins the Ooley-cow we builded better than we knew."

"I follow you at a great distance," said little Doc. "Proceed with the rat killing. Why did

we build better than we knew when we did not know anything?"

"Because," I explained, "Perkins not only looks like a cow and walks like a cow and plays golf like a cow, but he has the predominant characteristic of a cow. He has the one distinguishing trait which all country cows have in common. If you had studied that noble domestic animal as closely as I have, you would not need to be told what moved Mr. Perkins to strew the entire golf course with the mangled remains of the two old pirates before mentioned. Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott were milking him, yes, and it is quite likely that the Ooley-cow knew that he was being milked, but that knowledge was not the prime cause of the late unpleasantness."

"I still follow you," said Little Doc plaintively, "but I am losing ground every minute."

"Listen carefully," said I. "Pin back your ears and give me your undivided attention. There are many ways of milking a cow without exciting the animal to violence. I speak now of the old-fashioned cow—the country cow—from Iowa, let us say."

"The Ooley-cow is from Iowa," murmured Little Doc.

"Exactly. A city cow may be milked by machinery, and in a dozen different ways, but the country cow does not know anything about new fangled methods. There is one thing—and one thing only—which will make the gentlest old

mooley in Iowa kick over the bucket, upset the milker, jump a four-barred fence and join the wild bunch on the range. Do you know what that one thing is?"

"I haven't even a suspicion," confessed Little Doc.

Then I told him. I told him in words of one syllable, and after a time he was able to grasp the significance of my remarks. If I could make Little Doc see the point I can make you see it too. We go from here.

Wesley J. Perkins hailed from Dubuque, but he did not hail from there until he had gathered up all the loose change in Northeastern Iowa. When he arrived in sunny Southern California he was fifty-five years of age, and at least fifty of those years had been spent in putting aside something for a rainy day. Judging by the diameter of his bankroll, he must have feared the sort of a deluge which caused the early settlers to lay the ground plans for the Tower of Babel.

Now it seldom rains in Southern California—that is to say, it seldom rains hard enough to produce a flood—and as soon as Mr. Perkins became acquainted with climatic conditions he began to jettison his ark. He joined an exclusive downtown club, took up quarters there and spent his afternoons playing dominoes with some other members of the I've-got-mine Association. Aside from his habit of swelling up whenever he mentioned his home town, and in-

sisting on referring to it as "the Heidelberg of America," there was nothing about Mr. Perkins to provoke comment, unfavourable or otherwise. He was just one more Iowan in a country where Iowans are no novelty.

In person he was the mildest-mannered man that ever foreclosed a short-term mortgage and put a family out in the street. His eyes were large and bovine, his mouth drooped perpetually and so did his jowls, and he moved with the slow, uncertain gait of a venerable milch cow. He had a habit of lowering his head and staring vacantly into space, and all these things earned for him the unhandsome nickname by which he is now known.

"But why the Ooley-cow?" some one asked one day. "It doesn't mean anything at all!"

"Well," was the reply, "neither does Perkins."

But this was an error, as we shall see later.

It was an increasing waistline that caused the Ooley-cow to look about him for some form of gentle exercise. His physician suggested golf, and that very week the board of directors of the Country Club was asked to consider his application for membership. There were no ringing cheers, but he passed the censors.

I will say for Perkins that when he decided to commit golf he went about it in a very thorough manner. He had himself surveyed for three knickerbocker suits, he laid in a stock of soft shirts, imported stockings and spiked

shoes, and he gave our professional *carte blanche* in the matter of field equipment. It is not a safe thing to give a Scotchman permission to dip his hand in your change pocket, and MacPherson certainly availed himself of the opportunity to finger some of the Dubuque money. He took one look at the novice and unloaded on him something less than a hundredweight of dead stock. He also gave him a lesson or two, and sent him forth armed to the teeth with wood, iron and aluminum.

Almost immediately Perkins found himself in the hands of Poindexter and Sprott, two extremely hard-boiled old gentlemen who have never been known to take any interest in a financial proposition assaying less than seven per cent, and that fully guaranteed. Both are retired capitalists, but when they climbed out of the trenches and retreated into the realm of sport they took all their business instincts with them.

Uncle Billy can play to a twelve handicap when it suits him to do so, and his partner in crime is only a couple of strokes behind him; but they seldom uncover their true form, preferring to pose as doddering and infirm invalids, childish old men, who only think they can play the game of golf, easy marks for the rising generation. New members are their victims; beginners are just the same as manna from heaven to them. They instruct the novice humbly and apologetically, but always with a

small side bet, and no matter how fast the novice improves he makes the astounding discovery that his two feeble old tutors are able to keep pace with him. Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott are experts at nursing a betting proposition along, and they seldom win any sort of a match by a margin of more than two up and one to go. Taking into account the natural limitations of age they play golf very well, but they play a cinch even better—and harder. It is common scandal that Uncle Billy has not bought a golf ball in ten years. Old Man Sprott bought one in 1915, but it was under the mellowing influence of the third toddy and, therefore, should not count against him.

The Ooley-cow was a cinch. When he turned up, innocent and guileless and eager to learn the game, Uncle Billy and his running mate were quick to realise that Fate had sent them a downy bird for plucking, and in no time at all the air was full of feathers.

They played the Ooley-cow for golf balls, they played him for caddy hire, they played him for drinks and cigars, they played him for luncheons and they played him for a sucker—played him for everything, in fact, but the locker rent and the club dues. How they came to overlook these items is more than I know. The Ooley-cow would have stood for it; he stood for everything. He signed all the tags with a loose and vapid grin, and if he suffered from writer's cramp he never mentioned the fact. His

monthly bill must have been a thing to shudder at, but possibly he regarded this extra outlay as part of his tuition.

Once in a while he was allowed to win, for Poindexter and Sprott followed the system practised by other confidence men; but they never forgot to take his winnings away from him the next day, charging him interest at the rate of fifty per cent for twenty-four hours. The Ooley-cow was so very easy that they took liberties with him, so good-natured about his losses that they presumed upon that good nature and ridiculed him openly; but the old saw sometimes loses a tooth, the worm turns, the straight road bends at last, so does the camel's back, and the prize cow kicks the milker into the middle of next week. And, as I remarked before, the cow usually has a reason.

II

One morning I dropped into the downtown club which Perkins calls his home. I found him sitting in the reception room, juggling a newspaper and watching the door. He seemed somewhat disturbed.

"Good morning," said I.

"It is not a good morning," said he. "It's a bad morning. Look at this."

He handed me the paper, with his thumb at the head of the Lost-and-Found column, and I read as follows:

"Lost—A black leather wallet, containing private papers and a sum of money. A suitable reward will be paid for the return of same, and no questions asked. Apply to W. J. P., Argonaut Club, City."

"Tough luck," said I. "Did you lose much?"

"Quite a sum," replied the Ooley-cow. "Enough to make it an object. In large bills mostly."

"Too bad. The wallet had your cards in it?"

"And some papers of a private nature."

"Have you any idea where you might have dropped it? Or do you think it was stolen?"

"I don't know what to think. I had it last night at the Country Club just before I left. I know I had it then, because I took it out in the lounging room to pay a small bet to Mr. Poindexter—a matter of two dollars. Then I put the wallet back in my inside pocket and came straight here—alone in a closed car. I missed it just before going to bed. I telephoned to the Country Club. No sign of it there. I went to the garage myself. It was not in the car. Of course it may have been there earlier in the evening, but I think my driver is honest, and——"

At this point we were interrupted by a clean-cut looking youngster of perhaps seventeen years.

"Your initials are W. J. P., sir?" he asked politely.

"They are."

"This is your 'ad' in the paper?"

"It is."

The boy reached in his pocket and brought out a black leather wallet. "I have returned your property," said he, and waited while the Ooley-cow thumbed a roll of yellow-backed bills.

"All here," said Perkins with a sigh of relief. Then he looked up at the boy, and his large bovine eyes turned hard as moss agates. "Where did you get this?" he demanded abruptly. "How did you come by it?"

The boy smiled and shook his head, but his eyes never left Perkins' face. "No questions were to be asked, sir," said he.

"Right!" grunted the Ooley-cow. "Quite right. A bargain's a bargain. I—I beg your pardon, young man. . . . Still, I'd like to know. . . . Just curiosity, eh? . . . No? . . . Very well then. That being the case"—he stripped a fifty-dollar note from the roll and passed it over—"would you consider this a suitable reward?"

"Yes, sir, and thank you, sir."

"Good day," said Perkins, and put the wallet into his pocket. He stared at the boy until he disappeared through the street door.

"Something mighty queer about this," mused the Ooley-cow thoughtfully. "Mighty queer. That boy—he looked honest. He had good eyes and he wasn't afraid of me. I couldn't scare him worth a cent. Couldn't bluff him. . . . Yet

if he found it somewhere, there wasn't any reason why he shouldn't have told me. He didn't steal it—I'll bet on that. Maybe he got it from some one who did. Oh, well, the main thing is that he brought it back. . . . Going out to the Country Club this afternoon?"

I said that I expected to play golf that day.

"Come out with me then," said the Ooley-cow. "Poindexter and Sprott will be there too. Yesterday afternoon I played Poindexter for the lunches to-day. Holed a long putt on the seventeenth green, and stuck him. Come along, and we'll make Poindexter give a party—for once."

"It can't be done," said I. "Uncle Billy doesn't give parties."

"We'll make him give one," chuckled the Ooley-cow. "We'll insist on it."

"Insist if you want to," said I, "but you'll never get away with it."

"Meet me here at noon," said the Ooley-cow. "If Poindexter doesn't give the party I will."

I wasn't exactly keen for the Ooley-cow's society, but I accepted his invitation to ride out to the club in his car. He regaled me with a dreary monologue, descriptive of the Heidelberg of America, and solemnly assured me that the pretty girls one sees in Chicago are all from Dubuque.

It was twelve-thirty when we arrived at the Country Club, and Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott were there ahead of us.

"Poindexter," said Perkins, "you are giving a party to-day, and I have invited our friend here to join us."

Uncle Billy looked at Old Man Sprott, and both laughed uproariously. Right there was where I should have detected the unmistakable odour of a rodent. It was surprise number one.

"Dee-lighted!" cackled Uncle Billy. "Glad to have another guest, ain't we, Sprott?"

Sprott grinned and rubbed his hands. "You bet! Tell you what let's do, Billy. Let's invite everybody in the place—make it a regular party while you're at it!"

"Great idea!" exclaimed Uncle Billy. "The more the merrier!" This was surprise number two. The first man invited was Henry Bauer, who has known Uncle Billy for many years. He sat down quite overcome.

"You shouldn't do a thing like that, Billy," said he querulously. "I have a weak heart, and any sudden shock——"

"Nonsense! You'll join us?"

"Novelty always appealed to me," said Bauer. "I'm forever trying things that nobody has ever tried before. Yes, I'll break bread with you, but—why the celebration? What's it all about?"

That was what everybody wanted to know and what nobody found out, but the luncheon was a brilliant success in spite of the dazed and mystified condition of the guests, and the only limit was the limit of individual capacity. Eighteen

of us sat down at the big round table, and sandwich-and-milk orders were sternly countermanded by Uncle Billy, who proved an amazing host, recommending this and that and actually ordering Rhine-wine cup for all hands. I could not have been more surprised if the bronze statue in the corner of the grill had hopped down from its pedestal to fill our glasses. Uncle Billy collected a great pile of tags beside his plate, but the presence of so much bad news waiting at his elbow did not seem to affect his appetite in the least. When the party was over he called the head waiter. "Mark these tags paid," said Uncle Billy, capping the collection with a yellow-backed bill, "and hand the change to Mr. Perkins."

"Yes sir," said the head waiter, and disappeared.

I looked at the Ooley-cow, and was just in time to see the light of intelligence dawn in his big soft eyes. He was staring at Uncle Billy, and his lower lip was flopping convulsively. Everybody began asking questions at once.

"One moment, gentlemen," mooed the Ooley-cow, pounding on the table. "One moment!"

"Now don't get excited, Perkins," said Old Man Sprott. "You got your wallet back, didn't you? Cost you fifty, but you got it back. Next time you won't be so careless."

"Yes," chimed in Uncle Billy, "you oughtn't to go dropping your money round loose that way. It'll teach you a lesson."

"It will indeed." The Ooley-cow lowered his head and glared first at one old pirate and then at the other. His soft eyes hardened and the moss-agate look came into them. He seemed about to bellow, paw up the dirt and charge.

"The laugh is on you," cackled Poindexter, "and I'll leave it to the boys here. Last night our genial host dropped his wallet on the floor out in the lounging room. I kicked it across under the table to Sprott and Sprott put his foot on it. We intended to give it back to him to-day, but this morning there was an 'ad' in the paper—reward and no questions asked—so we sent a nice bright boy over to the Argonaut Club with the wallet. Perkins gave the boy a fifty-dollar note—very liberal, I call it—and the boy gave it to me. Perfectly legitimate transaction. Our friend here has had a lesson, we've had a delightful luncheon party, and the joke is on him."

"And a pretty good joke, too!" laughed Old Man Sprott.

"Yes," said the Ooley-cow at last, "a pretty good joke. Ha, ha! A mighty good joke." And place it to his credit that he managed a very fair imitation of a fat man laughing, even to the shaking of the stomach and the wrinkles round the eyes. He looked down at the tray in front of him and fingered the few bills and some loose silver.

"A mighty good joke," he repeated thoughtfully, "but what I can't understand is this—why

didn't you two jokers keep the change? It would have been just that much funnier."

III

The Ooley-cow's party was generally discussed during the next ten days, the consensus of club opinion being that some one ought to teach Poindexter and Sprott the difference between humour and petty larceny. Most of the playing members were disgusted with the two old skinflints, and one effect of this sentiment manifested itself in the number of invitations that Perkins received to play golf with real people. He declined them all, much to our surprise, and continued to wallop his way round the course with Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott, apparently on as cordial terms as ever.

"What are you going to do with such a besotted old fool as that?" asked Henry Bauer. "Here I've invited him into three foursomes this week—all white men, too—and he's turned me down cold. It's not that we want to play with him, for as a golfer he's a terrible thing. It's not that we're crazy about him personally, for socially he's my notion of zero minus; but he took his stinging like a dead-game sport and he's entitled to better treatment than he's getting. But if he hasn't any better sense than to pass his plate for more, what are you going to do about it?"

"'Ephraim is joined to idols,'" quoted Little Doc Ellis. "'Let him alone.'"

"No, it's the other way round," argued Bauer. "His idols are joined to him—fastened on like leeches. The question naturally arises, how did such a man ever accumulate a fortune? Who forced it on him, and when, and where, and why?"

That very afternoon the Ooley-cow turned up with his guest, a large, loud person, also from the Heidelberg of America, who addressed Perkins as "Wesley," and lost no time in informing us that Southern California would have starved to death but for Iowa capital. His name was Cottle—Calvin D. Cottle—and he gave each one of us his card as he was introduced. There was no need. Nobody could have forgotten him. Some people make an impression at first sight—Calvin D. Cottle made a deep dent. His age was perhaps forty-five, but he spoke as one crowned with Methuselah's years and Solomon's wisdom, and after each windy statement he turned to the Ooley-cow for confirmation.

"Ain't that so, Wesley? Old Wes knows, you bet your life! He's from my home town!"

It was as good as a circus to watch Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott sizing up this fresh victim. It reminded me of two wary old dogs circling for position, manœuvring for a safe hold. They wanted to know something about his golf game—what was his handicap, for instance?

"Handicap?" repeated Cottle. "Is that a California idea? Something new, ain't it?"

Uncle Billy explained the handicapping theory.

"Oh!" said Cottle. "You mean what do I go round in—how many strokes. Well, sometimes I cut under a hundred; sometimes I don't. It just depends. Some days I can hit 'em, some days I can't. That's all there is to it."

"My case exactly," purred Old Man Sprott. "Suppose we dispense with the handicap?"

"That's the stuff!" agreed Cottle heartily. "I don't want to have to give anybody anything; I don't want anybody to give me anything. I like an even fight, and what I say is, may the best man win! Am I right, gentlemen?"

"Absolutely!" chirped Uncle Billy. "May the best man win!"

"You bet I'm right!" boomed Cottle. "Ask old Wes here about me. Raised right in the same town with him, from a kid knee-high to a grasshopper! I never took any the best of it in my life, did I, Wes? No, you bet not! Remember that time I got skinned out of ten thousand bucks on the land deal? A lot of fellows would have squealed, wouldn't they? A lot of fellows would have hollered for the police; but I just laughed and gave 'em credit for being smarter than I was. I'm the same way in sport as I am in business. I believe in giving everybody credit. I win if I can, but if I can't—well,

there's never any hard feelings. That's me all over. You may be able to *lick* me at this golf thing—likely you will; but you'll never *scare* me, that's a cinch. Probably you gentlemen play a better game than I do—been at it longer; but then I'm a lot younger than you are. Got more strength. Hit a longer ball when I do manage to land on one right. So it all evens up in the long run."

Mr. Cottle was still modestly cheering his many admirable qualities when the Perkins party went in to luncheon, and the only pause he made was on the first tee. With his usual caution Uncle Billy had arranged it so that Dubuque was opposed to Southern California, and he had also carefully neglected to name any sort of a bet until after he had seen the stranger drive.

Cottle teed his ball and stood over it, gripping his driver until his knuckles showed white under the tan. "Get ready to ride!" said he. "You're about to leave this place!"

The club head whistled through the air, and I can truthfully say that I never saw a man of his size swing any harder at a golf ball—or come nearer cutting one completely in two.

"Topped it, by gum!" ejaculated Mr. Cottle, watching the maimed ball until it disappeared in a bunker. "Topped it! Well, better luck next time! By the way, what are we playing for? Balls, or money, or what?"

"Whatever you like," said Uncle Billy promptly. "You name it."

"Good! That's the way I like to hear a man talk. Old Wes here is my partner, so I can't bet with him, but I'll have a side match with each of you gentlemen—say, ten great, big, smiling Iowa dollars. Always like to bet what I've got the most of. Satisfactory?"

Uncle Billy glanced at Old Man Sprott, and for an instant the old rascals hesitated. The situation was made to order for them, but they would have preferred a smaller wager to start with, being petty larcenists at heart.

"Better cut that down to five," said Perkins to Cottle in a low tone. "They play a strong game."

"Humph!" grunted his guest. "Did you ever know me to pike in my life? I ain't going to begin now. Ten dollars or nothing!"

"I've got you," said Old Man Sprott.

"This once," said Uncle Billy. "It's against my principles to play for money; but yes, this once."

And then those two old sharks insisted on a foursome bet as well.

"Ball, ball, ball," said the Ooley-cow briefly, and proceeded to follow his partner into the bunker. Poindexter and Sprott popped conservatively down the middle of the course and the battle was on.

Battle, did I say? It was a massacre of the innocents, a slaughter of babes and sucklings. Our foursome trailed along behind, and took note of Mr. Cottle, of Dubuque, in his fruitless

efforts to tear the cover off the ball. He swung hard enough to knock down a lamp-post, but he seldom made proper connections, and when he did the ball landed so far off the course that it took him a dozen shots to get back again. He was hopelessly bad, so bad that there was no chance to make the side matches close ones. On the tenth tee Cottle demanded another bet—to give him a chance to get even, he said. Poindexter and Sprott each bet him another ten dollar note on the last nine, and this time Uncle Billy did not say anything about his principles.

After it was all over Cottle poured a few mint toddies into his system and floated an alibi to the surface.

"It was those confounded sand greens that did it," said he. "I'm used to grass, and I can't putt on anything else. Bet I could take you to Dubuque and flail the everlasting daylights out of you!"

"Shouldn't be surprised," said Uncle Billy. "You did a lot better on the last nine—sort of got into your stride. Any time you think you want revenge——"

"You can have it," finished Old Man Sprott, as he folded a crisp twenty-dollar note. "We believe in giving a man a chance—eh, Billy?"

"That's the spirit!" cried Cottle enthusiastically. "Give a man a chance; it's what I say, and if he does anything, give him credit. You beat me to-day, but I never saw this course before. Tell you what we'll do: Let's make a

day of it to-morrow. Morning and afternoon both. Satisfactory? Good! You've got forty dollars of my dough and I want it back. Nobody ever made me quit betting yet, if I figure to have a chance. What's money? Shucks! My country is full of it! Now then, Wesley, if you'll come out on the practise green and give me some pointers on this sand thing, I'll be obliged to you. Ball won't run on sand like it will on grass—have to get used to it. Have to hit 'em a little harder. Soon as I get the hang of the thing we'll give these Native Sons a battle yet! Native Sons? Native Grandfathers! Come on!" Uncle Billy looked at Old Man Sprott and Old Man Sprott looked at Uncle Billy, but they did not begin to laugh until the Ooley-cow and his guest were out of earshot. Then they clucked and cackled and choked like a couple of hysterical old hens.

"His putting!" gurgled Uncle Billy. "Did he have a putt to win a hole all the way round?"

"Not unless he missed count of his shots. Say, Billy!"

"Well?"

"We made a mistake locating so far West. We should have stopped in Iowa. By now we'd have owned the entire state!"

IV

I dropped Mr. Calvin D. Cottle entirely out of my thoughts; but when I entered the locker

room shortly after noon the next day something reminded me of him. Possibly it was the sound of his voice.

"Boy! Can't we have 'nother toddy here? What's the matter with some service? How 'bout you, Wes? Oh, I forgot—you never take anything till after five o'clock. Think of all the fun you're missing. When I get to be an old fossil like you maybe I'll do the same. Good rule. . . . You gentlemen having anything? No? Kind of careful, ain't you? Safety first, hey? . . . Just one toddy, boy, and if that mint ain't fresh, I'll . . . Yep, you're cagey birds, you are, but I give you credit just the same. And some cash. Don't forget that. Rather have cash than credit any time, hey? I bet you would! But I don't mind a little thing like that. I'm a good sport. You ask Wes here if I ain't. If I ain't a good sport I ain't anything. . . . Still, I'll be darned if I see how you fellows do it! You're both old enough to have sons in the Soldiers' Home over yonder, but you take me out and lick me again—lick me and make me like it! A couple of dried-up mummies with one foot in the grave, and I'm right in the prime of life! Only a kid yet! It's humiliating, that's what it is, humiliating! Forty dollars apiece you're into me—and a flock of golf balls on the side! Boy! Where's that mint toddy? Let's have a little service here!"

I peeped through the door leading to the lounging room. The Dubuque-California four-

some was grouped at a table in a corner. The Ooley-cow looked calm and placid as usual, but his guest was sweating profusely, and as he talked he mopped his brow with the sleeve of his shirt. Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott were listening politely, but the speculative light in their eyes told me that they were wondering how far they dared go with this outlander from the Middle West.

"Why," boomed Cottle, "I can hit a ball twice as far as either one of you! 'Course I don't always know where it's going, but the main thing is I got the *strength*. I can throw a golf ball farther than you old fossils can hit one with a wooden club, yet you lick me easy as breaking sticks. Can't understand it at all. . . . Twice as strong as you are. . . . Why, say, I bet I can take one hand and outdrive you! *One hand!*"

"Easy, Calvin," said the Ooley-cow reprovingly. "Don't make wild statements."

"Well, I'll bet I can do it," repeated Cottle stubbornly. "If a man's willing to bet his money to back up a wild statement, that shows he's got the right kind of a heart anyway.

"I ought to be able to stick my left hand in my pocket and go out there and trim two men of your age. I ought to, and I'll be damned if I don't think I can!"

"Tut, tut!" warned the Ooley-cow. "That's foolishness."

"Think so?" Cottle dipped his hand into his

pocket and brought out a thick roll of bills. "Well, this stuff here says I can do it—at least I can *try*—and I ain't afraid to back my judgment."

"Put your money away," said Perkins. "Don't be a fool!"

Cottle laughed uproariously and slapped the Ooley-cow on the back.

"Good old Wes!" he cried. "Ain't changed a bit. Conservative! Always conservative! Got rich at it, but me I got rich taking chances. What's a little wad of bills to me, hey? Nothing but chicken-feed! I'll bet any part of this roll—I'll bet *all* of it—and I'll play these sun-dried old sports with one hand. Now's the time to show whether they've got any sporting blood or not. What do you say, gentlemen?"

Uncle Billy looked at the money and moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue.

"Couldn't think of it," he croaked at length.

"Pshaw!" sneered Cottle. "I showed you too much—I scared you!"

"He ain't scared," put in Old Man Sprott. "It would be too much like stealing it."

"I'm the one to worry about that," announced Cottle. "It's my money, ain't it? I made it, didn't I? And I can do what I damn please with it—spend it, bet it, burn it up, throw it away. When you've worried about everything else in the world it'll be time for you to begin worrying about young Mr. Cottle's money! This slim little roll—bah! Chicken-

feed! Come get it if you want it!" He tossed the money on the table with a gesture which was an insult in itself. "There it is—cover it! Put up or shut up!"

"Oh, forget it!" said the Ooley-cow wearily. "Come in and have a bite to eat and forget it!"

"Don't want anything to eat!" was the stubborn response. "Seldom eat in the middle of the day. But I'll have 'nother mint toddy. . . . Wait a second, Wes. Don't be in such a rush. Lemme understand this thing. These—these gentlemen here, these two friends of yours, these dead-game old Native Sons have got eighty dollars of my money—not that it makes any difference to me, understand, but they've got it—eighty dollars that they won from me playing golf. Now I may have a drink or two in me and I may not, understand, but anyhow I know what I'm about. I make these—gentlemen a sporting proposition. I give 'em a chance to pick up a couple of hundred apiece, and they want to run out on me because it'll be like stealing it. What kind of a deal is that, hey? Is it sportsmanship? Is it what they call giving a man a chance? Is it——"

"But they know you wouldn't have a chance," interrupted the Ooley-cow soothingly. "They don't want a sure thing."

"They've had one so far, haven't they?" howled Cottle. "What are they scared of now? 'Fraid I'll squeal if I lose? Tell 'em about me, Wes. Tell 'em I never squealed in my life! I

win if I can, but if I can't—'s all right. No kick coming. There never was a piker in the Cottle family, was there, Wes? No, you bet not! We're sports, every one of us. Takes more than one slim little roll to send us up a tree! If there's anything that makes me sick, it's a cold-footed, penny-pinching, nickel-nursing, sure-thing player!"

"Your money does not frighten me," said Uncle Billy, who was slightly nettled by this time. "It is against my principles to play for a cash bet——"

"But you and your pussy-footed old side-partner got into me for eighty dollars just the same!" scoffed Cottle. "You and your principles be damned!"

Uncle Billy swallowed this without blinking, but he did not look at Cottle. He was looking at the roll of bills on the table.

"If you are really in earnest——" began Poindexter, and glanced at Old Man Sprott.

"Go ahead, Billy," croaked that aged reprobate. "Teach him a lesson. He needs it."

"Never mind the lesson," snapped Cottle. "I got out of school a long time ago. The bet is that I can leave my left arm in the clubhouse safe—stick it in my pocket—and trim you birds with one hand."

"We wouldn't insist on that," said Old Man Sprott. "Play with both hands if you want to."

"Think I'm a welsher?" demanded Cottle. "The original proposition goes. 'Course I

wouldn't really cut the arm off and leave it in the safe, but what I mean is, if I use two arms in making a shot, right there is where I lose. Satisfactory?"

"Perkins," said Uncle Billy, solemnly wagging his head, "you are a witness that this thing has been forced on me. I have been bullied and browbeaten and insulted into making this bet——"

"And so have I," chimed in Old Man Sprott. "I'm almost ashamed——"

The Ooley-cow shrugged his shoulders.

"I am a witness," said he quietly. "Calvin, these gentlemen have stated the case correctly. You have forced them to accept your proposition——"

"And he can't blame anybody if he loses," finished Uncle Billy as he reached for the roll of bills.

"You bet!" ejaculated Old Man Sprott. "He was looking for trouble, and now he's found it. Count it, Billy, and we'll each take half."

"That goes, does it?" asked Cottle.

"Sir?" cried Uncle Billy.

"Oh, I just wanted to put you on record," said Cottle, with a grin. "Wesley, you're my witness too. I mislaid a five-hundred-dollar note the other day, and it may have got into my change pocket. Might as well see if a big bet will put these safety-first players off their game! Anyhow, I'm betting whatever's there. I ain't sure how much it is."

"I am," said Uncle Billy in a changed voice. He had come to the five-hundred-dollar bill, sandwiched in between two twenties. He looked at Old Man Sprott, and for the first time I saw doubt in his eyes.

"Oh, it's there, is it?" asked Cottle carelessly. "Well, let it all ride. I never backed up on a gambling proposition in my life—never pinched a bet after the ball started to roll. Shoot the entire works—'s all right with me!"

Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott exchanged significant glances, but after a short argument and some more abuse from Cottle they toddled over to the desk and filled out two blank checks—for five hundred and eighty dollars apiece.

"Make 'em payable to cash," suggested Cottle. "You'll probably tear 'em up after the game. Now the next thing is a stakeholder——"

"Is that—necessary?" asked Old Man Sprott.

"Sure!" said Cottle. "I might run out on you. Let's have everything according to Hoyle—stakeholder and all the other trimmings. Anybody'll be satisfactory to me; that young fellow getting an earful at the door; he'll do."

So I became the stakeholder—the custodian of eleven hundred and sixty dollars in coin and two checks representing a like amount. I thought I detected a slight nervousness in the signatures, and no wonder. It was the biggest bet those old petty larcenists had ever made in their lives. They went in to luncheon—at the invitation of the Ooley-cow, of course—but I

noticed that they did not eat much. Cottle wandered out to the practise green, putter in hand, forgetting all about the mint toddy which, by the way, had never been ordered.

V

"You drive first, sir," said Uncle Billy to Cottle, pursuing his usual system. "We'll follow you."

"Think you'll feel easier if I should hit one over into the eucalyptus trees yonder?" asked the man from Dubuque. "Little nervous, eh? Does a big bet scare you? I was counting on that. . . . Oh, very well, I'll take the honour."

"Just a second," said Old Man Sprott, who had been prowling about in the background and fidgeting with his driver. "Does the stakeholder understand the terms of the bet? Mr. Cottle is playing a match with each of us individually——"

"Separately and side by each," added Cottle.

"Using only one arm," said Old Man Sprott.

"If he uses both arms in making a shot," put in Uncle Billy, "he forfeits both matches. Is that correct, Mr. Cottle?"

"Correct as hell! Watch me closely, young man. I have no moustache to deceive you—nothing up my sleeve but my good right arm. Watch me closely!"

He teed his ball, dropped his left arm at his side, grasped the driver firmly in his right hand

and swung the club a couple of times in tentative fashion. The head of the driver described a perfect arc, barely grazing the top of the tee. His two-armed swing had been a thing of violence—a baseball wallop, constricted, bound up, without follow-through or timing, a combination of brute strength and awkwardness. Uncle Billy's chin sagged as he watched the easy, natural sweep of that wooden club—the wrist-snap applied at the proper time, and the long graceful follow-through which gives distance as well as direction. Old Man Sprott also seemed to be struggling with an entirely new and not altogether pleasant idea.

"Watch me closely, stakeholder," repeated Cottle, addressing the ball. "Nothing up my sleeve but my good right arm. Would you gentlemen like to have me roll up my sleeve before I start?"

"Drive!" grunted Uncle Billy.

"I'll do that little thing," said Cottle, and this time he put the power into the swing. The ball, caught squarely in the middle of the clubface, went whistling toward the distant green, a perfect screamer of a drive without a suspicion of hook or slice. It cleared the cross-bunker by ten feet, carried at least a hundred and eighty yards before it touched grass, and then bounded ahead like a scared rabbit, coming to rest at least two hundred and twenty-five yards away. "You like that?" asked Cottle, moving off the tee. "I didn't step into it very

hard or I might have had more distance. Satisfactory, stakeholder?'' And he winked at me openly and deliberately.

''Wha—what sort of a game is this?'' gulped Old Man Sprott, finding his voice with an effort.

''Why,'' said Cottle, smiling cheerfully, ''I wouldn't like to say off-hand and so early in the game, but you might call it golf. Yes, call it golf, and let it go at that.''

At this point I wish to go on record as denying the rumour that our two old reprobates showed the white feather. That first tee shot, and the manner in which it was made, was enough to inform them that they were up against a sickening surprise party; but, though startled and shaken, they did not weaken. They pulled themselves together and drove the best they knew how, and I realised that for once I was to see their true golfing form uncovered.

Cottle tucked his wooden club under his arm and started down the course, and from that time on he had very little to say. Uncle Billy and Old Man Sprott followed him, their heads together at a confidential angle, and I brought up the rear with the Ooley-cow, who had elected himself a gallery of one.

The first hole is a long par four. Poindexter and Sprott usually make it in five, seldom getting home with their seconds unless they have a wind behind them. Both used brassies and both were short of the green. Then they watched Cottle as he went forward to his ball.

"That drive might have been a freak shot," quavered Uncle Billy.

"Lucky fluke, that's all," said Old Man Sprott, but I knew and they knew that they only hoped they were telling the truth.

Cottle paused over his ball for an instant, examined the lie and drew a wooden spoon from his bag. Then he set himself, and the next instant the ball was on its way, a long, high shot, dead on the pin.

"And maybe that was a fluke!" muttered the Ooley-cow under his breath. "Look! He's got the green with it!"

From the same distance I would have played a full mid-iron and trusted in Providence, but Cottle had used his wood, and I may say that never have I seen a ball better placed. It carried to the little rise of turf in front of the putting green, hopped once, and trickled onto the sand. I was not the only one who appreciated that spoon shot.

"Say," yapped Old Man Sprott, turning to Perkins, "what are we up against here? Miracles?"

"Yes, what have you framed up on us?" demanded Uncle Billy vindictively.

"Something easy, gentlemen," chuckled the Ooley-cow. "A soft thing from my home town. Probably he's only lucky."

The two members of the Sure-Thing Society went after their customary fives and got them, but Cottle laid his approach putt stone dead at

the cup and holed out in four. He missed a three by the matter of half an inch. I could stand the suspense no longer. I took Perkins aside while the contestants were walking to the second tee.

"You might tell a friend," I suggested. "In strict confidence, what are they up against?"

"Something easy," repeated the Ooley-cow, regarding me with his soft, innocent eyes. "They wanted it and now they've got it."

"But yesterday, when he played with both arms——" I began.

"That was yesterday," said Perkins. "You'll notice that they didn't have the decency to offer him a handicap, even when they felt morally certain that he had made a fool bet. Not that he would have accepted it—but they didn't offer it. They're wolves, clear to the bone, but once in a while a wolf bites off more than he can chew." And he walked away from me. Right there I began reconstructing my opinion of the Ooley-cow.

In my official capacity as stakeholder I saw every shot that was played that afternoon. I still preserve the original score card of that amazing round of golf. There are times when I think I will have it framed and present it to the club, with red-ink crosses against the thirteenth and fourteenth holes. I might even set a red-ink star against the difficult sixth hole, where Cottle sent another tremendous spoon shot down the wind, and took a four where most

of our Class-A men are content with a five. I might make a notation against the tricky ninth, where he played a marvellous shot out of a sand trap to halve a hole which I would have given up as lost. I might make a footnote calling attention to his deadly work with his short irons. I say I think of all these things, but perhaps I shall never frame that card. The two men most interested will never forget the figures. It is enough to say that Old Man Sprott, playing such golf as I had never seen him play before, succumbed at the thirteenth hole, six down and five to go. Uncle Billy gave up the ghost on the fourteenth green, five and four, and I handed the money and the checks to Mr. Calvin D. Cottle, of Dubuque. He pocketed the loot with a grin.

"Shall we play the bye-holes for something?" he asked. "A drink—or a ball, maybe?" And then the storm broke. I do not pretend to quote the exact language of the losers. I merely state that I was surprised, yes, shocked at Uncle Billy Poindexter. I had no idea that a member of the Episcopal church—but let that pass. He was not himself. He was the biter bitten, the milker milked. It makes a difference. Old Man Sprott also erupted in an astounding manner. It was the Ooley-cow who took the centre of the stage.

"Just a minute, gentlemen," said he. "Do not say anything which you might afterward regret. Remember the stakeholder is still with us. My friend here is not, as you intimate, a

crook. Neither is he a sure-thing player. We have some sure-thing players with us, but he is not one of them. He is merely the one-armed golf champion of Dubuque—and the Middle West."

Imagine an interlude here for fireworks, followed by pertinent questions.

"Yes, yes, I know," said Perkins soothingly. "He can't play a lick with two arms. He never could. Matter of fact, he never learned. He fell off a haystack in Iowa—how many years ago was it, Cal?"

"Twelve," said Mr. Cottle. "Twelve next July."

"And he broke his left arm rather badly," explained the Ooley-cow. "Didn't have the use of it for—how many years, Cal?"

"Oh, about six, I should say."

"Six years. A determined man can accomplish much in that length of time. Cottle learned to play golf with his right arm—fairly well, as you must admit. Finally he got the left arm fixed up—they took a piece of bone out of his shin and grafted it in—newfangled idea. Decided there was no sense in spoiling a one-armed star to make a dub two-armed golfer. Country full of 'em already. That's the whole story. You picked him for an easy mark, a good thing. You thought he had a bad bet and you had a good one. Don't take the trouble to deny it. Gentlemen, allow me to present the champion one-armed golfer of Iowa and the Middle West!"

"Yes," said Cottle modestly, "when a man does anything, give him credit for it. Personally I'd rather have the cash!"

"How do you feel about it now?" asked the Ooley-cow.

Judging by their comments, they felt warm—very warm. Hot, in fact. The Ooley-cow made just one more statement, but to me that statement contained the gist of the whole matter.

"This," said he, "squares us on the wallet proposition. I didn't say anything about it at the time, but that struck me as a scaly trick. So I invited Cal to come out and pay me a visit. . . . Shall we go back to the clubhouse?"

I made Little Doc Ellis see the point; perhaps I can make you see it now.

Returning to the original simile, the Ooley-cow was willing to be milked for golf balls and luncheons and caddie hire. That was legitimate milking, and he did not resent it. He would have continued to give down in great abundance, but when they took fifty dollars from him, in the form of a bogus reward, he kicked over the bucket, injured the milkers and jumped the fence.

Why? I'm almost ashamed to tell you, but did you ever hear of a country cow—an Iowa cow—that would stand for being milked from the wrong side?

I think this will be all, except that I anticipate a hard winter for the golfing beginners at our club.

ADOLPHUS AND THE ROUGH DIAMOND

I

NOW that Winthrop Watson Wilkins has taken his clubs away and cleaned out his locker some of the fellows are ready enough to admit that he wasn't half bad. On this point I agree with them. He was not. He was two-thirds bad, and the remainder was pure, abysmal, impenetrable ignorance.

Windy Wilkins may have meant well—perhaps he did—but when a fellow doesn't know, and doesn't know that he doesn't know and won't let anybody tell him that he doesn't know, he becomes impossible and out of place in any respectable and exclusive golf club. I suppose his apologists feel kindly toward him for eliminating Adolphus Kitts and squaring about a thousand old scores with that person, but I claim it was a case of dog eat dog and neither dog a thoroughbred. I for one am not mourning the departure of Windy Winkins, and if I never see him again, I will manage to bear it somehow.

They say that every golf club has one member who slips in while the membership committee is looking the other way. In Windy's case the committee had no possible excuse. There was an excuse for Adolphus Kitts. Adolphus got in when our club absorbed the Crystal Springs Country Club, and out of courtesy we did not scrutinise the Crystal Springs membership list, but Windy's name was proposed in the regular manner. All that was known of him was that he was a stranger in the community who had presumably never been in jail and who had money. The club didn't need his initiation fee and wasn't after new members, but for some reason or other the bars were down and Windy got in. The first thing we knew he landed in our midst with a terrific splash and began slapping total strangers on the back and trying to sign all the tags and otherwise making an ass of himself. He didn't wait for introductions—just butted in and took things for granted.

"You see, boys," he explained, "I've always been more or less of an ath-a-lete and I've tried every game but this one. Now that I'm gettin' to the time of life when I can't stand rough exercise any more, I thought I'd kind of like to take up golf. I would have done it when I lived in Chicago, but my friends laughed me out of it —said it was silly to get out and whale a little white pill around the country—but I guess anything that makes a man sweat is healthy, hey?

And then my wife thought it would be a good thing socially, you know, and—no, waiter, this round is on me. Oh, but I insist! My card, gentlemen. That's right; keep 'em. I get 'em engraved by the thousand. Waiter! Bring some cigars here—perfectos, cigarettes—anything the gentlemen'll have, and let it be the best in the house! I don't smoke cigarettes myself, but my friends tell me that's the next step after takin' up golf! Ho, ho! No offence to any of you boys; order cigarettes if you want 'em. Everybody smokes on the new member!"

Well, that was Windy's tactful method of introducing himself. Is it any wonder that we asked questions of the membership committee? No out-and-out complaints, you understand. We just wanted to know where Windy came from and how he got in and who was to blame for it. Most of the information was furnished by Cupid Cutts.

Cupid is pretty nearly the whole thing at our club. In every golf club there is one man who does the lion's share of the work and gets nothing but abuse and criticism for it, and Cupid is our golfing wheel horse, as you might say. He is a member of the board of directors, a member of the house committee, chairman of the greens committee, and the Big Stick on the membership committee. He is also the official handicapper, which is a mighty good thing to bear in mind when you play against him. I have known Cupid to cut a man's handicap six

strokes for beating him three ways on a ball-ball-ball Nassau.

Cutts is no Chick Evans, or anything like that, but, considering his physical limitations, he is a remarkable golfer and steady as an eight-day clock. He is so fat that he can't take a full-arm swing to save his life, but his little half-shot pops the ball straight down the middle of the course every time, and he plays to his handicap with a persistency that has broken many a youngster's heart. Straight on the pin all the time—that's his game, and whenever he's within a hundred yards of the cup he's liable to lay his ball dead.

There are lots of things I might tell you about Cupid Cutts—he's a sort of social Who's Who in white flannels and an obesity belt, and an authority on scandal and gossip, past and present—but the long and short of it is that it would be hard to get on without him, even harder than it is to get on with him. Well, we asked Cupid about Windy Wilkins, and Cupid went to the bat immediately.

"Absolutely all right, fellows, oh, absolutely! A little rough, perhaps, a diamond in the rough, but a good heart. And all kinds of money. He won't play often enough to bother anybody."

That was where Cupid was wrong two ways. Windy played every day, rain or shine, and he bothered everybody. He was just as noisy on the course as he was in the locker room, and

when he missed his putt on the eighteenth green the fellows who were driving off at No. 1 had to wait until he cooled down. And when he managed to hit his drive clean he yelled like a Comanche and jumped up and down on the tee. He did all the things that can't be done, and when we spoke to him kindly about golfing etiquette he snorted and said he never had much use for red tape anyway and thought it was out of place in sport.

He tramped around on the greens and bothered people who wanted to putt. He talked and laughed when others were driving. He played out of his turn. He drove into foursomes whenever he was held up for a minute, just to let the players know that he was behind 'em.

He was absolutely impossible, socially and otherwise, but the most astonishing thing was the way he picked up the game after the first month or so. Windy was a tremendously big man and looked like the hind end of an elephant in his knickers; but for all his size he developed a powerful, easy swing and a reasonable amount of accuracy. As for form, he didn't know the meaning of the word. His stance was never twice the same, his grip was a relic of the dark ages, he handled his irons as a labouring man handles a pick, he did everything that the books say you mustn't do, and, in spite of it, his game improved amazingly. And he called us moving-picture golfers!

"Every move a picture!" he would say. "You have to plant your dear little feet just so. Your tee has got to be just so high. Your grip must be right to the fraction of an inch. You must waggle the club back and forth seven times before you dare to swing it, and then chances are you don't get anywhere! Step up and paste her on the nose the way I do! Forget this Miss Nancy stuff and hit the ball!"

When Windy got down around 90 he swelled all out of shape, and the next step, of course, was to have some special clubs built by MacLeish, the professional. They were such queer-looking implements that Cupid joked him about them one Saturday noon in the locker room. It was then that we got a real line on Windy, and Cupid found out that even a rough diamond may have a cutting edge.

"You're just like all beginners," said Cupid. "You make a few rotten shots and then think the clubs must be wrong. The regular models aren't good enough for you. You have to have some built to order, with bigger faces and stiffer shafts. Get it into your head that the trouble is with you, not with the club. The ball will go straight if you hit it right."

"Clubs make a lot of difference," said Windy. "Ten strokes anyway."

"Nonsense! A good, mechanical golfer can play with any clubs!"

"I suppose you think you can do it?"

"I know I can."

"And you'd bet on it?"

"Certainly."

Windy didn't say anything for as much as two minutes. The rascal was thinking.

"*All* right," said he at last. "Tell you what I'll do. I'll make you a little proposition. You say you can play with any clubs. Give me the privilege of pickin' 'em out for you, and I'll bet you fifty dollars that I trim you on an even game—no handicap."

"Yes, but where are you going to get these clubs for me to play with? Off a scrap pile or something?"

"Right out of MacLeish's shop! Brand-new stuff, selected from the regular stock. And I'll go against you even, just to prove that you don't know it all, even if you have been playin' golf for twenty years!"

It was a flat, out-and-out challenge. Cupid looked Windy up and down with a pitying smile—the same smile he uses when an 18-handicap man asks to be raised to 24.

"I'd be ashamed to rob you, Wilkins," said he.

Windy didn't say anything, but he went into his locker and brought out a roll of bills about the size of a young grindstone. He counted fifty dollars off it, and you couldn't have told the difference. It looked just as big as before. He handed the fifty to me.

"It would be stealing it," said Cupid, but there was a hungry look in his eye.

"If you get away with it," said Windy, "I won't complain to the police. Put up or shut up."

Well, it looked like finding the money. We knew that Windy couldn't break a 90 to save his life, and Cupid had done the course in an 84, using nothing but a putting cleek.

"How many clubs can I have?" asked Cupid with his usual caution in the matter of bets.

"Oh, six or eight," answered Windy. "Makes no difference to me."

"I'll take eight," said Cupid briskly. "And if you don't mind, I'll post a check. I'm not in the habit of carrying the entire cash balance in my jeans."

"Fair enough!" said Windy. "You boys are all witnesses to the terms of this bet. I'm to pick out eight clubs—eight new ones—and Cutts here is to play with 'em. Is that understood?"

"Perfectly!" grinned Cupid. "It'll just cost you fifty fish to find out that a mechanical golfer can lick you with strange weapons."

Windy went out and Cupid promised us all a dinner on the proceeds of the match.

"I don't want the fellow's money," said he, "but Windy's entirely too fresh for a new member. A beating will do him good and make him humble. Eight clubs. If he brings me only two or three that I can use—a driver, a midiron, and a putter—I'll hang his hide on the fence too easy. He's made a bad bet."

But it wasn't such a bad bet after all. Windy

came back with eight clubs in the crook of his arm, and when Cupid caught a glimpse of the collection he howled himself purple in the face, and no wonder. Eight nice, new, shiny, mashie niblicks!

You see, nothing was said about the *sort* of clubs Windy was to pick out, and he had selected eight of the same pattern, no good on earth except for digging out of bunkers or popping the ball straight up in the air! Harry Vardon himself can't *drive* with a mashie niblick!

"What are you beefin' about?" asked Windy. "Eight clubs, you said, and here they are. Play or pay."

"Pay! Why, man alive, it's a catch bet—a cinch bet! It's not being done this year at all! It's like stealing the money!"

"And you thought you could steal mine," was the cool reply. "You thought you had a cinch bet, didn't you? Be honest now. Eight clubs, by the terms of the agreement, and you'll play with 'em or forfeit the fifty."

Cupid looked at the mashie niblicks and then he looked at Windy. I looked at him too and began to understand how he got his money. His face was as hard as granite. "You'd collect that sort of a bet—from a friend?" It was Cupid's last shot.

"Just as quick as you would," said Windy.

"I'll write you a check," and Cupid turned on his heel and started for the office.

Windy tried to turn it into a joke—after he got the check—but nobody seemed to know where to laugh, and following that little incident he found it a bit hard to get games. Whenever Windy was hunting a match the foursomes were full and there was nothing doing. A sensitive man would have suffered tortures, but Windy, with about as much delicacy as a rhinoceros, continued to infest the course morning, noon, and night. When he couldn't find any one weak-minded enough to play with him he played with himself, and somehow managed to make just as much noise as ever with only a caddie to talk to.

This was the state of affairs when Adolphus Kitts returned from the East, barely in time to shoot a 91 in the qualifying round of the Annual Handicap. We had hoped that he would miss this tournament, but no; there he was, large as life—which is pretty large—and ugly as ever. Grim and silent and nasty, he stepped out on No. 1 tee, and Cupid Cutts groaned as he watched him drive off.

"That fellow," said Cupid, "would hang his harp on the walls of the New Jerusalem and come back from the golden shore just to get into a handicap event, where nobody wants him, nobody will speak to him, and every one wishes him an ulcerated tooth! Why didn't he stay in the East?"

There were about four hundred and seventy-six reasons why Adolphus was unpopular with

us; a few will suffice. In the first place, he was a cup hunter. He had an unholy passion for silver goblets and trophies with the club emblem on them, and he preferred a small silver vase—worth not to exceed three dollars, wholesale—to the respect and admiration of his fellow golfers. Heaven knows why he wanted trophies! They are never any good unless a man has friends to show them to!

In the second place, Adolphus didn't care how he won a cup, and, as Cupid used to say, the best club in his bag was the book of rules.

If you don't know it already, I must tell you that golf is the most strictly governed game in the world, and also the most ceremonious. It is as full of "thou shalt nots" as the commandments. There are rules for everything and everybody on the course, and the breaking of a rule carries a penalty with it—the loss of a stroke or the loss of a hole, as the case may be. Very few golfers play absolutely to the letter of the law; even those who know the rules incur penalties through carelessness, and in such a case it is not considered sporting to demand the pound of flesh; but there was nothing sporting about Adolphus Kitts.

He knew every obscure rule and insisted on every penalty. Question him, and he fished out the book. That book of rules stiffened his match play tremendously, besides making his opponents want to murder him. It was rather a rotten system, but Kitts hadn't a drop of

sporting blood in his whole big body, and the element of sportsmanship didn't enter into his calculations at all. He claimed strokes and holes even when not in competition, and because of this he found it difficult to obtain partners or opponents.

"He's a golf lawyer, that's what he is—a technical lawyer!" said Cupid one day. "And I wouldn't even play the nineteenth hole with him—I wouldn't, on a bet!"

Come to think of it, that is about the bitterest thing you can say of a golfer.

II

Our Annual Handicap is the blue-ribbon event of the year so far as most of us are concerned. The star players turn up their noses at it a bit, but that is only because they realise that they have a mighty slim chance to carry off the cup. The high-handicap men usually eliminate the crack performers, which is the way it should be. What's the good of a handicap event if a scratch man is to win it every year?

Sixty-four members qualify and are paired off into individual matches, which are played on handicaps, the losers dropping out. The man who "comes through" in the top half of the drawing meets the survivor of the lower half in the final match for the cup, which is always a very handsome and valuable trophy,

calculated to rouse all the cupidity in a cup hunter's nature.

When the pairings were posted on the bulletin board Kitts was in the upper half and Windy in the lower one. Kitts had a handicap of 8 strokes, and was really entitled to 12, but Cupid wouldn't listen to his wails of anguish. Windy was a 12 man, and nobody figured the two renegades as dangerous until the sixty-four entrants had narrowed down to eight survivors. Kitts had won his matches by close margins, but Windy had simply smothered his opponents by lopsided scores, and there they were, in the running and too close to the finals for comfort.

We began to sit up and take notice. Cupid read the riot act to Dawson, who was Windy's next opponent, and also had a talk with Aubrey, who was to meet Kitts. "Wilkins and Kitts must be stopped!" raved Cupid. "We don't want 'em to get as far as the semifinals, and it's up to you chaps to play your heads off and beat these rotters!"

Dawson and Aubrey saw their duty to the club, but that was as far as they got with it. Windy talked from one end of his match to the other and made Dawson so nervous that any one could have beaten him, and Kitts pulled the book of rules on Aubrey and literally read him out of the contest.

After this the interest in the tournament grew almost painful. Overholzer and Watts

were the other semifinalists, and we told them plainly that they might as well resign from the club if they did not win their matches. Overholzer spent a solid week practicing on his approach shots, and Watts carried his putter home with him nights, but it wasn't the slightest use. Windy tossed an 83 at Overholzer, along with a lot of noisy conversation, and an 83 will beat Overholzer every time he starts. Poor Watts went off his drive entirely and gave such a pitiful exhibition that Kitts didn't need the rule book at all.

And there we were, down to the finals for the beautiful handicap cup, sixty-two good men and true eliminated, and a pair of bounders lined up against each other for the trophy!

"This," said Cupid Cutts, "is a most unfortunate situation. I can't root for a sure-thing gambler and daylight highwayman like Wilkins, and as for the other fellow I hope he falls into a bunker and breaks both his hind legs off short! Think of one of those fellows carrying home that lovely cup! Ain't it enough to make you sick?"

It made us all sick, nevertheless quite a respectable gallery assembled to watch Wilkins and Kitts play their match.

"Looks like we're goin' to have a crowd for the main event!" said Windy, who had put in the entire morning practicing tee shots. "In that case I'll buy everybody a little drink, or sign a lunch card—whatever's customary.

Don't be bashful, boys. Might as well drink with the winner before as well as after, you know!"

At this point Adolphus came in from the locker room and there was an embarrassed silence, broken at last by Windy. "Somebody introduce me to my victim," said he. "We've never met."

"You don't tell me!" exclaimed Cupid. "Of all the men in this club, I'd think you fellows ought to know each other! Kitts, this is Wilkins—shake hands and get together!"

Among the other reasons for not liking him, Adolphus had a face. I'm aware that a man cannot help his face, but he can make it easier to look at by wearing a pleasant expression now and then. Kitts seldom used his face to smile with. As he turned to shake hands with Windy I noticed that his left hip pocket bulged a trifle, and I knew that Adolphus was taking no chances. That's where he carries the book of rules.

"How do," said Kitts, looking hard at Windy. "I'm ready if you are, sir."

"Oh, don't be in such a hurry!" said Wilkins. "We've got a lot of drinks comin' here. Sit down and have one."

"Thank you, I never drink," replied Adolphus.

"Well, then, have a sandwich. Might as well load up; you've got a hard afternoon ahead of you."

"Thanks, I've had my lunch."

"Then let's talk a little," urged Windy. "Let's get acquainted. This is the first time I ever had a whack at a cup, and I don't know how to act. I play golf by main strength and awkwardness, but I get there just the same. They tell me you're a great man for rules."

Windy paused, but Kitts didn't say anything, and Cupid stepped on my foot under the table.

"Now, I don't go very strong on the rules," continued Windy wheedlingly. "I like to play a sporty game—count all my shots, of course—but damn this technical stuff is what *I* say. For instance, if you should accidentally tap your ball when you was addressin' it, and it should turn over, I wouldn't call a stroke on you. I'd be ashamed to do it. If I win, I want to win on my *playin'*, and not on any technicalities. Ain't that the way you feel about it, hey?"

Kitts looked uncomfortable, but he wouldn't return a straight answer to the question. He said something about hoping the best man would win, and went out to get his clubs.

"Cheerful kind of a party, ain't he?" said Windy. "I've told him where I stand. *I* ain't goin' to claim anything on him if his foot slips, and he oughtn't to claim anything on *me*. If he's a real sport, he won't. What do you boys think?"

We thought a great deal, but nobody offered any advice.

"Well," said Windy, getting up and stretch-

ing, "he's got to start me 2 up, on handicap, and I'm drivin' like a fool. I should worry about his technicalities!"

III

Our No. 1 hole is somewhere around 450 yards, and the average player is very well satisfied if he fetches the putting green on his third shot. It is uphill all the way, with a bunker to catch a topped drive, rough to the right and left to punish pulls and slices, and sand pits guarding the green. Windy drove first, talking all the time he was on the tee.

"Hope the gallery doesn't make you nervous, Kitts. *I* always drive best when people are watchin' me, but then I've got plenty of nerve, they say. You may not like my stance, but watch this one sail! And when I address the ball I address it in a few brief, burnin' words, like this: 'Take a ride, you little white devil, take a ride!'" Whis-sh! Click! And the little white devil certainly took a ride—long, low, and straight up the middle of the course—the ideal ball, with just enough hook on it to make it run well after it struck the ground. "Two hundred and sixty yards if it's an inch!" said Windy, grinning at Kitts. "Lay your pill beside that one—if you think you can!"

"You're a 12-handicap man—and you drive like that!" said Kitts, which was, of course, a neat slap at Cupid, who was within earshot.

"Cutts is a friend of mine," bragged Windy. "That's why I'm a 12 man. I really play to a 6."

Kitts saw that he wasn't going to get any goats with conversational leads, so he shut up and teed his ball. He was one of those deliberate players who must make just so many motions before they pull off their shots. First he took his stance and his practice swings; then he moved up on the ball and addressed it; then he waggled his club back and forth over it, looking up the course after every waggle, as if picking out a nice spot; then, when he had annoyed everybody, and Windy most of all, he sent a perfectly atrocious slice into the rough beyond the bunker.

"Humph!" grunted Wilkins. "A lot of preparation for such a rotten shot! Looks like I'm 3 up and 17 to go. Probably won't be much of a contest——"

"Do you expect to win it with your mouth?" snapped Kitts, and Windy winked at the rest of us.

"His goat is loose already!" said he in a stage whisper. "He can't stand the gaff!"

Adolphus got out of the tall grass on his third shot, but dropped his fourth into a deep sand pit short of the green.

"With a lot of luck," said Windy, reaching for his brassy, "you may get an 8—but I doubt it. Pretty soft for me, pretty soft!" And with the sole of his club he patted the turf behind his

ball, smoothing it down—three gentle little pats. "Pret-ty soft!" murmured Windy, and sent the ball whistling straight on to the green for a sure 4. Then he turned to Kitts. "D'you give up?" said he. "Might just as well; you haven't got a burglar's chance!"

"I claim the hole," said Adolphus calmly, fishing out the book of rules.

"You—what?"

"Rule No. 10," said Kitts, beginning to read. "'In playing through the green, irregularities of surface which could in any way affect the player's stroke shall not be removed nor pressed down by the player——' You patted the grass behind your ball and improved the lie by smoothing it down. I claim the hole."

Windy went about the colour of a nice ripe Satsuma plum. His neck swelled so much that his ears moved outward. "You don't mean to say that you're goin' to call a thing like that on me when you're already licked for the hole?" He spoke slowly, as if he found it hard to believe that the situation was real.

"I claim it," repeated Adolphus monotonously. "You can appeal to Mr. Cutts, as chairman of the greens committee."

"Hey, Fatty! All I did was pat the grass a few times with my club, and this—this *gentleman* here says he claims the hole."

"You violated the rule," shortly answered Cupid, who may be fat but does not like to be reminded of it so publicly.

"And you're goin' to let him get away with that?" demanded Windy. "I'm on the green in two, and he's neck-deep in the sand on his fourth——"

"Makes no difference," said Cupid, turning away. "You ought to know the rules by now. Kitts wins the hole."

Well, Windy finally accepted the situation, but he was in a savage frame of mind—so savage that he walked all the way to the second tee without opening his mouth. There he stepped aside, with a low bow to Kitts.

"Your *honour,* I believe," said he with nasty emphasis.

No. 2 is a short hole—a drive and a pitch. Windy got a good ball, and it rolled almost to the edge of the green. Kitts's drive was short but straight, and he pitched his second to the green, some thirty feet from the pin, and the advantage seemed to be with Windy until it was discovered that his ball was lying in a cuppy depression of the turf.

"That's lovely, ain't it?" growled Windy. "A fine drive—and look at this for a lie! I was goin' to use a putter, but a putter won't get the ball out of there. Hey, Fatty, had I better use a niblick here?"

"I claim the hole," said Kitts, reaching for the book.

"But I haven't done anything!" howled Windy. "How can you claim the hole when I haven't played the shot?"

"You asked advice," said Kitts, reading. "'A player may not ask for nor willingly receive advice from any one except his own caddie, his partner, or his partner's caddie.' This is not a foursome, so you have no partner. Advice is defined as any suggestion which could influence a player in determining the line of play, in the choice of a club, or in the method of making a stroke. You asked whether you should use a niblick—and you lose the hole."

Windy, knocked speechless for once in his life, looked over at Cupid, and Cupid nodded his head.

"The match is now all square," said Kitts as he started for the third tee.

"And squared by a couple of petty larceny protests!" said Windy. "Hey, Mister Bookworm, wait a minute! I want to tell you something for your own good!"

"Oh, play golf!" said Kitts, over his shoulder.

Windy strode after him and took him by the arm. It wasn't a gentle grasp either.

"That's exactly what I want to say. *You* play golf, Mr. Kitts! Play it with your clubs, and forget that book in your hip pocket. If you pull it on me again, I'll—I'll——"

Adolphus tried to smile, but it was a sickly effort.

"You can't intimidate me," said he.

"Maybe not," said Windy, quite earnestly, "but I can lick you within an inch of your life—

and I will. Is there anything in the book about that? If you read me out of this cup, you better make arrangements to have it sent direct to the hospital. It'll make a nice flower holder—if you've got any friends that think enough of you to send flowers!"

"You gentlemen are witnesses to these threats," said Kitts, appealing to the gallery.

"We didn't hear a word," said Cupid. "Not a word. Go on and play your match and stop squabbling. You act like a couple of fishwives!"

The contestants walked off in the direction of the tee, with Windy still rubbing it in.

"A word to the wise. Keep that damn' book in your pocket, if you don't want to eat it—cover and all!"

"Suppose they do mix it?" said Cupid, mopping his brow. "Sweet little golfing scandal, eh? Can't you see the headlines in the newspapers? 'Country Club finalists in fist fight on links!' And some of these roughneck humourists will congratulate us on golf becoming one of the vital, red-blooded sports! Oh, lovely!"

"Bah!" said I. "There will be no fight. No man will fight who smiles like a coyote when he is getting a call down."

"But a coyote will fight if you put it up to him, don't make any mistake about that. And Kitts will spring the book on Windy again, I feel it in my bones, and if he does—choose your partners for the one-step! Oh, why did we ever let these rotters into the club?"

IV

I see no reason for inflicting upon you a detailed description of the next fifteen holes of golfing frightfulness. Golf is a game which requires mental calm, and the contestants were entirely out of calmness after the second hole and could not concentrate on their shots.

Windy began driving all over the shop, hooking and slicing tremendously, and Kitts manhandled his irons in a manner fit to make a hardened professional weep. Neither of them could have holed a five-foot putt in a wash-tub, and they staggered along side by side, silent and nervous and savage, and if Windy managed to win a hole Kitts would be sure to take the next one and square the match. But he didn't take any holes with the book. When Windy broke a rule—which he did every little while—Kitts would sneer and pretend to look the other way. He tried to convey the impression that it was pity and contempt that made him blind to Windy's lapses, but he didn't fool me for a minute. It was fear of consequences.

And so they came to the last hole, all square, and also all in.

Our eighteenth has a vicious reputation among those golfing unfortunates who slice their tee shots. The drive must carry a steep hill, the right slope of which pitches away to a deep, narrow ravine—a ravine scarred and marred by thousands of niblick shots, but otherwise as dis-

gusted Nature left it. We call it Hell's Half Acre, though the first part of the name would be quite sufficient.

The only improvements that have ever been made in this sinister locality have been made by golf clubs, despairingly wielded. Hell's Half Acre is full of stunted trees with roots half out of the ground, and thick brush and matted weeds, and squarely in the middle of this desolation is a deep sink, or pit, known as the Devil's Kitchen. Hell's Half Acre is bad enough, believe one who knows, but the Devil's Kitchen is the last hard word in hazards, and it is a crime to allow such a plague spot within a mile of a golf course.

At a respectful distance we watched the renegades drive from the eighteenth tee. Kitts had the honour—if there is any honour in winning a four hole in eight strokes—and messed about over his ball even longer than usual. His drive developed a lovely curve to the right, and went skipping and bounding down the hill toward the ravine.

"And that'll be in the Kitchen unless something stops it!" said Cupid with a sigh of relief. "I was afraid the blighters might halve this one and need extra holes!"

Now with Adolphus in the Devil's Kitchen all Windy needed was a straight ball over the brow of the hill—in fact, a ball anywhere on the course would be almost certain to win the hole and the match—but when he walked out on the

tee it was plain to be seen that he had lost confidence in his wooden club. Any golfer knows what it means to lose confidence in his wood, and Windy had reason to doubt his driver. His tee shots had been fearfully off direction, and here was one that *had* to go straight.

He teed his ball, swung his club a couple of times, and shook his head. Then he yelled at his caddie.

"Oh, boy! Bring me my cleek!"

Now, a cleek is a wonderful club if a man knows how to use one, but it produces a low tee shot, as a general thing. It produced one for Windy—a screamer, flying with the speed of a rifle bullet. I thought at first that it was barely going to clear the top of the hill, but I misjudged it. Three feet higher and the ball would have been over, but it struck the ground and kicked abruptly to the right, disappearing in the direction of the Devil's Kitchen. We heard a crashing noise. It was Windy splintering his cleek shaft over the tee box.

"Both down!" ejaculated Cupid. "Suffering St. Andrew, what a finish!"

We arrived on the rim of the Kitchen and peered into that wild amphitheatre. Kitts had already found his ball, and was staring at it with an expression of dumb anguish on his face. It was lying underneath a tangle of sturdy oak roots, as safely protected as if an octopus was trying to hatch something out of it.

Windy was combing the weeds which grew on

the abrupt sides of the pit, too full of his own trouble to pay any attention to his opponent.

"If it's a lost ball——" said Cupid.

But it wasn't. Windy found it, halfway up the left slope, hidden in the weeds, and not a particularly bad lie except for the fact that nothing human could have taken a stance on that declivity. Having found his ball, Windy took a look at Kitts's lie and then, for the first and only time in his golfing career, Wilkins recognised the rules of the game. "You're away, sir," said he to Kitts. "Play!"

Adolphus took his niblick and attacked the octopus. His first three strokes did not even jar the ball, but they damaged the oak roots beyond repair. On his eighth attempt the ball popped out of its nest, and the next shot was a very pretty one, sailing up and out to the fair green, but there was no applause from the gallery.

"Countin' the drive," said Windy, "that makes ten, eh?"

A man may play nine strokes in a hazard, but he hates to admit it. Adolphus grunted and withdrew to the other side of the pit, from which point he watched Windy morosely. With victory in sight the latter became cheerful again; conversation bubbled out of him.

"Boy, slip me the niblick and get up yonder on the edge of the ravine where you can watch this ball. I'm goin' to knock it a mile out of here. Ten shots he's had. If it was me, I'd give up.

How am I to get a footin' on this infernal side hill? Spikes won't hold in that stuff. Wish I was a goat. Aha! The very thing!"

Suddenly he delivered a powerful blow at the slope some distance below his ball and three or four feet to the left of it. Cupid gasped and opened his mouth to say something, but I nudged him and he subsided, clucking like a nervous hen.

"What's the idea?" demanded Kitts.

"To make little boys ask questions," was the calm reply. "I climbed the Alps once. Had to dig holes for my feet. Guess I haven't forgotten how, but diggin' with a blasted niblick is hard work."

"Oh!" said Kitts.

Windy continued to hack at the wall, the gallery looking on in tense silence. Nobody would have offered a suggestion; we all felt that it was their own affair, and on the knees of the gods, as the saying is. When Windy had hacked out a place for his right foot he cut another one for his left. The weeds were tough and the soil was hard, and he grunted as he worked.

"Yep—that Alps trip—taught me something. Comes in—handy now. Pretty nifty—job, hey?"

I suppose a mountain climber would have called it a nifty job. Cupid began to mutter.

"Be quiet!" said I. "Let's see if Kitts has nerve enough to call it on him!"

With the shaft of his niblick in his teeth,

Windy swarmed up the side of the wall, found the footholds and planted himself solidly. Grasping a bush above his head with his left hand, he measured the distance with his eye, steadied himself and swung the niblick with his powerful right arm. It was a wonderful shot, even if Windy Wilkins did make it; the ball went soaring skyward, far beyond all trouble.

"*Some—out!*" he panted, looking over his shoulder at Kitts. "I guess that'll clinch the match!"

For just a second Adolphus hesitated; then he must have thought of the cup. "I rather think it will," said he. "You're nicely out, Wilkins—in forty-seven strokes."

"Forty-seven devils!" shouted Windy. "I'm out *in two!*"

"In a hazard," quoted Kitts, "the club shall not touch the ground, nor shall anything be touched or moved before the player strikes at the ball." At this point Adolphus made a serious mistake; he reached for the book. "Under the rule," he continued, "I could claim the hole on you, but I won't do that. I'll only count the strokes you took in chopping a stance for yourself——"

That was where Windy dropped the niblick and jumped at him, and Cupid was correct about the coyote. Put him in a hole where he can't get out, attack him hard enough, and he *will* fight.

Adolphus dropped the book and nailed Windy

on the chin with a right uppercut that jarred the whole Wilkins family.

"Keep out of it, everybody!" yelled Cupid with a sudden flash of inspiration. "It's an elimination contest! More power to both of 'em—and may they both lose!"

Inside of two seconds the whole floor of the Devil's Kitchen was littered up with fists and elbows and boots and knees. They fought into clinches and battered their way out of them; they tripped over roots and scrambled to their feet again; they tossed all rules to the winds except the rule of self-preservation. The air was full of heartfelt grunts and sounds as of some one beating a rag carpet, and the language which floated to us was—well, elemental, to say the least. And through it all the gallery looked down in decent silence; there was no favourite for whom any one cared to cheer.

When Windy came toiling up out of the pit alone, but one remark was addressed to him.

"Aren't you going to play it out?" asked Cupid.

"Huh?" said Windy, pausing. His coat was torn off his back, his soiled white trousers were out at the knees, his nose was bleeding freely, and his mouth was lopsided.

"Aren't you going to finish the match? You've only played 46. Kitts made a mistake in the count."

"Finish—hell!" snarled Windy. "You roosted up here like a lot of buzzards and let me

chop myself out of the contest! I feel like finishin' the lot of you, and I'm through with any club that'll let a swine like Kitts be a member!"

Oddly enough, this last statement was substantially the same as the one Adolphus made when he recovered consciousness.

The wily Cupid, concealing from each the intentions of the other, and becoming a bearer of pens, ink, and paper, managed to secure both their resignations before they left the clubhouse that evening, and peace now reigns at the Country Club.

We have been given to understand that in the future the committee on membership will require gilt-edged certificates of character and that no rough diamonds need apply.

Nobody won the handicap cup, and nobody knows what to do with it, though there is some talk of having it engraved as follows:

"Elimination Trophy—won by W. W. Wilkins, knockout, one round."